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THE RED BOOK MAGAZINE

JANUARY
1922



EDITH WHARTON

Whose last work, "The Age of Innocence," won for her the Pulitzer prize as the best novel written by an American last year, has completed for THE RED BOOK MAGAZINE the most intensely human story that has thus far come from her pen. It begins in the next, the February, issue.

Cover Design, painted by Haskell Coffin Art Section, Beautiful Women

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More thousands of Red Book Magazine readers sent in titles to the November contest than to either of the preceding contests.

The title which won the \$100 capital prize in the September contest submitted by George W. Dainton of Meriden, Conn., was "The Immaculate Deception"

The title which won the \$100 capital prize in the October contest submitted by Lisle Scott of Garden City, Kan., was "Two Wives of Linford"

The title selected as the best of all submitted in the November contest was "The Asbestos Moth" and was submitted by two of the contestants, each of whom, under the terms of the contest, received the full \$100 capital prize

The two Checks, Each for the Capital Prize of \$100, for this Title, were sent on December 1st, to James M. Kane, Doylestown, Penn., and A. M. Weiler, Morton, Illinois

On December 1st, checks for \$5 each were sent to the other 1000 prize winners in the November contest whose names are listed below and on fourth page following.

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(Continued on fourth following page)

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"I found your instructions easy to follow and your method delightful. In 30 days I lost 28 pounds—3 pounds the very first week. My general health has been greatly benefited."
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Being Fat Since
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little lessons under the title of "Weight Control—The Basis of Health." This is now offered to you on free trial.

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Why Some People Are Never At Ease Among Strangers

PEOPLE of culture can be recognized at once. They are calm, well-poised. They have a certain dignity about them, a certain calm assurance which makes people respect them. It is because they know exactly what to do and say on every occasion that they are able to mingle with the most highly cultivated people and yet be entirely at ease.

But there are some people who are never at ease among strangers. Because they do not know the right thing to do at the right time, they are awkward, self-conscious. They are afraid to accept invitations because they do not know what to wear, how to acknowledge introductions, how to make people like them. They are timid in the presence of celebrated people because they do not know when to rise and when to remain seated, when to speak and when to remain silent, when to offer one's chair and when not to. They are always uncomfortable and embarrassed when they are in the company of cultured men and women.

It is only by knowing definitely, without the slightest doubt, what to do, say, write and wear on all occasions under all conditions, that one is able to be dignified, charming and well-poised at all times.

How Etiquette Gives Charm and Poise

Etiquette means good manners. It means knowing what to do at the right time, what to say at the right time. It consists of certain important little laws of good conduct that have been adopted by the best circles in Europe and America and which serve as a barrier to keep the uncultured and ill-bred out of the circles where they would be uncomfortable and embarrassed.

People with good manners, therefore, are people whose poise and dignity impress you immediately with a certain awe, a certain respect. Etiquette makes them graceful, confident. It enables them to mingle with the most cultured people and be perfectly at ease. It takes away their self-consciousness, their timidity. By knowing what is expected of them, what is the correct thing to do and say they become calm, dignified and well poised—and they are welcomed and admired in the highest circles of business and society.

Here's the Way People Judge Us

Let us pretend that we are in the drawing room and the hostess is serving tea. Numerous little questions of conduct confront us. If we know what to do we are happy, at ease. But if we do not know the correct and cultured thing to do, we are ill at ease.

We know we are betraying ourselves. We know that those who are with us can tell immediately, simply by watching us and talking to us, if we are not cultured.

For instance, one must know how to eat cake correctly. Should it be taken up in the fingers or eaten with a fork? Should the napkin be entirely unfolded or should the

center crease be allowed to remain? May lump sugar be taken up with the fingers?

There are other problems, too—many of them. Should the man rise when he accepts a cup of tea from the hostess? Should he thank her? Who should be served first? What should the guest do with the cup when he or she has finished the tea? Is it good form to accept a second cup? What is the secret of creating conversation and making people find you pleasant and agreeable?

It is so easy to commit embarrassing blunders, so easy to do what is wrong. But etiquette tells us just what is expected of us and guards us from all humiliation and discomfort.

Etiquette in Public

Here are some questions which will help you find out just how much you know about the etiquette that must be observed among strangers. See how many of them you can answer.

When a man and woman enter the theatre together, who walks first down the aisle? When the usher points out the seats, does the man enter first or the woman? May a man leave a woman alone during intermission?

There is nothing that so quickly reveals one's true station and breeding than awkward, poor manners at the table. Should the knife be held in the left hand or the right? Should olives be eaten with the finger or with a fork? How is lettuce eaten? What is the correct and cultured way to eat corn on the cob? Are the finger-tips of both hands placed into the finger-bowl at once, or just one at a time?

When a man walks in the street with two women does he walk between them or next to the curb? Who enters the street car first the man or the woman?

When does a man tip his hat? On what occasions is it considered bad form for him to pay a woman's fare? May a man on any occasion hold a woman's arm when they are walking together?

Some people learn all about etiquette and correct conduct by associating with cultured people and learning what to do and say at the expense of many embarrassing blunders. But most people are now learning quickly and easily through the famous Book of Etiquette—a splendid, carefully compiled, authentic guide towards correct manners on all occasions.

The Book of Etiquette

The Book of Etiquette makes it possible for you to do, say, write and wear what is absolutely correct and in accord with the best form on every occasion—whether you are to be bridesmaid at a wedding or usher



Many embarrassing blunders can be made in a public restaurant. Should the young lady in the picture pick up the fork, or leave it for the waiter to attend to? Or should one of the men pick it up?

at a friend's private theatre party. It covers everyday etiquette in all its phases. There are chapters on the etiquette of engagements, weddings, parties and all social entertainments. There are interesting chapters on correspondence, invitations, calls and calling cards. New chapters on the etiquette in foreign countries have been added, and there are many helpful hints to the man or woman who travels.

With the Book of Etiquette to refer to, there can be no mistakes, no embarrassment. One knows exactly what is correct and what is incorrect. And by knowing so definitely that one is perfect in the art of etiquette, a confident poise is developed which enables one to appear in the most elaborate drawing-room, among the most brilliant and highly cultured people, without feeling the least bit ill at ease.

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What is this amazing secret that can work such wonders? It is just this: *The thing behind all big achievement, whether in business, political or military life, is Opportunity.* The man who wins is the man who sees his opportunity and seizes it. The man who never rises above the rut is the man who lets his opportunity pass.

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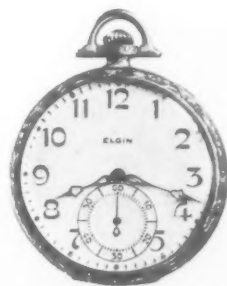
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Film Play Star



BETTY CARSDALE

in Ziegfeld "Follies"

Photo by Edward Thayer Monroe, New York

Beautiful Women



IRENE MARCELLUS
in Ziegfeld "Follies"

Photo by Edward Thayer Monroe, New York



URSULA MACK
in Selwyn's "Snapshots of 1921"
Photo by White Studio, New York

Beautiful Women



ALBERTINE MARLOWE
in Ziegfeld "Follies"
Photo by Edward Thayer Monroe, New York

The MASTER FORMULA

During the Civil War a certain material used in making one of the Squibb products became very scarce and its price extremely high. A young chemist suggested to Dr. Edward R. Squibb that another ingredient be substituted—one which cost less and was easier to obtain, but was not so satisfactory. "By changing your formula in this way," the young man argued, "you will save money and most people will never know the difference."

"Young man," was the reply, "I am always willing to change a formula when I can improve it. But please remember that the Master Formula of every worthy business is honor, integrity and trustworthiness. That is one formula I cannot change."

We all know that there are men and women who devote a lifetime to some science, art or profession with no thought of wealth or profit beyond that which naturally follows worthy achievement. Not only are there such men and women, but there are such business institutions as well.

Such institutions are interested primarily in making something as fine as it can be made, and only secondarily are they interested in the profit.

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SQUIBB



The Magazine of a Remade World

On the Passing of Josiah Bumstead

A Common-sense Editorial

by

BRUCE BARTON

JOSIAH BUMSTEAD is dead. He lived on a little run-down farm, and up to the last breath he stood firm for his rights.

I shall never forget the proud way in which he once repelled an unworthy suggestion on the part of a well-to-do neighbor. The neighbor was clearing a swamp and asked Josiah for a couple of days' help, at the regular rate, of course. It was dirty work; the neighbor was in mud almost to his knees.

With that instinctive dignity which never deserted him, Josiah waved the idea aside. He guessed he "hadn't quite come to that," he remarked with a laugh. Later he told the incident to the group of wise men who grace the front of the livery stable, and they applauded his sturdy independence. Just because a man has had hard luck, they said, is no reason why he should let himself be imposed upon.

Mrs. Bumstead did not always eat quite as regularly as some of the other women in town; but her abstinence was in a splendid cause. She had the joy of knowing that she lived with a man who had never once stooped to an unworthy task.

Josiah Bumstead would never have demeaned himself as Abraham Lincoln did.

Do you remember the slights and criticism which McClellan heaped upon Lincoln? One evening Lincoln called at McClellan's house

to keep an appointment. McClellan came in an hour late, and, although he knew that the President was waiting for him, strode rudely upstairs and went to bed.

Lincoln's friends besought him to discharge the insolent general, but Lincoln only smiled and said: "Never mind; I will hold McClellan's horse if he will only bring us success."

Josiah Bumstead would never have lowered himself like that.

He would have had scant sympathy with Count Gurowski, the Polish patriot, who fled to this country rather than surrender his principles.

"Is there a bog near here?" asked Gurowski. "I wish to earn some money. I wish to dig peat."

"Oh, no indeed, sir," his admirers protested. "You cannot do this kind of degrading work."

"I cannot be degraded," he replied; "I am Gurowski."

A POOR sort of nobleman, Josiah would have said. He himself was one of Nature's noblemen, as the preacher who conducted the funeral took pains to remind us all.

He has gone to a place to which he could not take his dignity. And Mrs. Bumstead, who has examined his old pine desk, says that his dignity is about all that Josiah seems to have left.

Another of Bruce Barton's Common-sense Editorials will appear on this page in the next issue of The Red Book Magazine.



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THE charm of fine underthings depends as much upon the suggestion of sweet immaculate cleanliness as upon exquisite texture and painstaking needlework—every woman of refinement will acknowledge this.

So, it is quite natural for the mind to travel from the admiration of such garments to thoughts of Ivory Soap. Fabrics and handwork that leave nothing to be desired call for the soap that leaves nothing to be desired.

Likewise with beautiful faces, delicate hands, vigorous bodies and luxuriant hair—the more nearly perfect they are, the more appropriate it seems to care for them with Ivory Soap.

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THE RED BOOK MAGAZINE

JANUARY 1922. VOL. XXXVIII, NUMBER 3

KARL EDWIN HARRIMAN, *Editor*



IN the Roman palace, which raised its Renaissance front amid the slums, a ball was in progress.

On the massive marble staircase flanked with ancient statues, were ascending groups of guests, whose features seemed appropriate to an age more subtle and poetical than ours. Yet now and then, among those classic countenances, appeared a woman's face refreshing in its irregularity, or irradiating the blonde charms of a land of paler sunshine, or informed with the naïveté of younger races. These were the wives that the great houses had imported from afar.

At the head of the staircase, on the "noble floor," one gazed down a long vista of rooms, each immense, each flooded with light from crystal chandeliers which illuminated the ceilings covered by antique artists with goddesses and monsters, the brocaded walls and the tall, gilt-framed mirrors, the innumerable objects of art and clusters of flowers.

In this setting, through a golden mist,

Two Roses

By
*Stephen
French
Whitman*

Illustrated by
Everett Shinn

there floated above the marble floors a sheen of white skin and delicately tinted satin, a sparkle of historic jewelry, a flicker of eyes extraordinarily eloquent.

From a distance came the music of violins and flutes.

Suddenly one saw at the head of the staircase a woman all in black, a diamond necklace on her bosom, and against her corsage one rose, very large, its copper-colored petals flecked and edged with brown.

Her fair, smooth face, which afforded no clue to her age, seemed like a mobile mask on which continually one degree of graciousness melted into another. Her scattered smiles, the nodding of her head, her whole advance into that haze of lights and colors, appeared to be regulated by a perfect self-control. Still, one received an impression of an opposite quality vibrating beneath that serene exterior—perhaps the habitual psychic stress of those who wander through labyrinths in which the perfect treasure is always just round the corner.

An old gentleman standing near by, watching the feminine pageant with a smile at once sleepy and wise, bowed low to this woman in black. As she swept on toward the host and the hostess, a newcomer to Rome asked the old fellow her name.

She was Princess Azzarossa, an American.

"Then that curious flower of hers is the Amélie rose?"

"Oh, yes," the old man assented, "it is the Amélie rose, her imposition of herself upon posterity, her pyramid, her monument of imperishable granite."

"A surprising species of rose," said the stranger, "but to my mind not so fine as many another."

"To Donna Amélie Azzarossa's mind," the old man returned, "it is the most beautiful rose in the world."

And as he gazed at some exquisite young women moving past him—always past him—toward the pleasures and romantic hazards of the ball, he continued to smile wisely. So the aged do who feel that in recompense for vanished days they have received all knowledge, and that their utterances are infallible.

The old connoisseur admired Princess Azzarossa for reasons other than her beauty. To him she seemed typical of her native land. Over there great cities rose out of wildernesses with a miraculous swiftness, as in the Arabian Nights. There, sometimes, a generation or two transformed poverty into colossal wealth. The grandchildren of once lowly persons blossomed forth into suave, luxurious creatures, their social self-confidence unabashed in the presence of those whose pride was based upon a thousand years of dominance and culture.

In Donna Amélie, moreover, this old gentleman discerned, though in a futile form, the motive-power of her country—its will to greatness, its boldness of attack and certainty of triumph.

He would have been interested to know her whole story, and how she was finally to regard the famous Amélie rose.

IN the beginning her name had been Emily. She had lived in a little country town called Morleysville.

The great westward currents of American power avoided that place; it was not even on a railroad. There a narrow simplicity of life obtained. From lack of close comparison—since those were the days before moving-pictures and the wide circulation of popular magazines—one's largest needs were small in Morleysville. A reward that would have seemed petty in many another place satisfactorily crowned a lifetime of endeavor.

The father had come to Morleysville in Emily's infancy, a widower, already middle-aged, broken in health and spirit, with just enough money to purchase and maintain a cottage on the edge of town. A romantic mystery clothed the invalid. Some of the townspeople suspected that his present name was fictitious. He never received a letter.

Even the woman who took care of Emily and kept his house could afford no information about his past.

At first, as she faithfully reported, he spent many hours reading. His books were in strange languages, or if in English, on incomprehensible subjects—political, financial, philosophical. A few volumes contained pictures of vast carved buildings, of city squares embellished with marble statues and thronged with foreigners, of apartments of amazing splendor. Now and then, in the evening, he took from a tin lock-box a mass of papers and letters.

Then maybe the housekeeper, peeping through the keyhole, would hear him mutter:

"Pompey, since you are already dead on the Egyptian shore, why these bonds between death and life?"

And one night he burned the contents of the lock-box.

Indeed, when Emily was nearly old enough to take an interest

in such things, he began to destroy his books. The pages covered with foreign phrases, the essence of old, sophisticated civilizations, burst into flames. The volumes in English, wherein men weighed down by a thousand conflicting theories of life had struggled to gain peace, all became ashes. And the pictures of antique beauty—reminders of days of mastery and exultation, souvenirs of joys now transformed into torments—shriveled out of his life and, as he hoped, were barred forever from the life of his child.

"It is far better," he mused, "that she should never know than that she should strive, perhaps gain, and lose, and remember."

Then, because he was now so much of an invalid, and at this moment believed himself to be alone, he wept, sighing:

"Shame, Pompey! Is this you?"

The eavesdropping housekeeper slipped away, all atremble at this anguish and mystery.

AS Emily grew up, she learned nothing at home or at school that the other girls of Morleysville did not learn. But while the others turned eagerly from their studies of the remote to the enjoyment of the familiar, Emily felt her soul rush forth to distant regions, where mankind was wrestling magnificence from fate.

Yet her father thought that he had protected her from ambition!

She was a beautiful, tall, silent girl of seventeen when his illness became acute. Her slender figure expressed a fastidious grace. Her dark eyes, deep but illegible, had absorbed the strangeness of her home. About her, too, there gathered, as it seemed, the aura of an alien spirit.

Still it was not he—that lifelong, rigorous instructor in contentment—who discerned this quality in her. Before him, even more than before the others, Emily took care to hide her heart. He never knew of the longings that came to her when she stared at the encircling hills, or of the terror that possessed her when she gazed round the shabby sitting-room with the question:

"Is this what my life must be?"

Even on his deathbed the father believed that he had shaped his daughter's future.

To the minister he disclosed his hope that Emily would marry and live always in Morleysville. Until she had chosen a husband—and already she had suitors—he wished that she might be taken into the pastor's family. The father then began to speak of money-matters; but the other protested:

"If there were nothing at all, we would care for her and love her."

So he said, the good man, though he feared that Emily's father had never been a believer.

Late that night, left alone for a moment, the invalid raised himself in bed, saying:

"Order the carriage. Request Mr. Crighton to hurry the decoding of that note. I shall be late for my appointment." Sinking back, he was silent for a while, then murmured: "Madame wished to be buried in the dress in which she was presented at court. Kindly see if it can be found."

At the sound of his voice they hurried back to him. When the old physician had given the minister a meaning glance, Emily's father surprised them all by saying distinctly:

"You are wrong. I am not dying. I have been dead these many years, ever since I no longer felt in me the Thing-in-Itself."

"You mean God?" the minister asked eagerly.

"My friend, I am sorry; but to me the Thing-in-Itself is Will."

He would not, of course, have said that if he had been himself, for his daughter was present.

OF Emily's suitors, she cared most for young Virgil Behan.

He was a farmer's son, taller than she, romantically handsome, a sunburnt dreamer who carried in his pocket a volume of Thoreau or Emerson.

At first he loved more than anything else the changing face of Nature: it was through her that he seemed to obtain at dawn, at twilight, and maybe even in the glare of noon, the sense of a harmony pervading the whole universe. But presently he came to see in Emily the perfection of all Nature's work, the supreme earthly achievement, the beautiful crown of innumerable ages of experiment. And Nature, whom he had worshiped, he found to be merely the shrine prepared for the enthronement of this human goddess, so exquisitely evolved from the primeval chaos.

Her secret pride, her passion for homage, thrilled at the delicacy of this adoration. The higher Virgil Behan exalted her, the more valuable he was to her. His love appeased a little those cravings which she never confessed. Yet even as they



Across his face there passed a shadow. He stood up and asked: "How are the famous roses?"

sauntered at twilight she could not prevent her gaze from rising toward the hills.

One evening, where the willow trees let down their foliage to the brook, and wild roses spread their bloom, Virgil Behan forgot to worship. Catching her in his arms, he whispered:

"Oh, Emily, you must marry me!"

For an instant she felt herself being betrayed by an emotion of her own, almost matching his in strength. But just in time she strained back in his embrace, with the words:

"Will you take me away?"

"Yes—for our wedding-trip."

"No, forever."

At last she had disclosed her secret to another. Moreover, by the tone of that reply she had revealed an immeasurable hatred of her shrine. He released her and stood dumfounded.

No more than one of his great trees, could he have uprooted himself from that region. He tried to explain to her that away from his fields, pursuing any other destiny, he would be nothing. He was sick from amazement because she did not love what seemed to him so lovable. He struggled to convert her now, in one moment, by a rush of phrases.

She listened to him sadly. Her heart was still pulsing from that moment of weakness. But for all that, no more than the fledgling of an eagle could she have been happy here on the ground, once the glamour of the sun had filled her eyes.

When he could find no more to say, she responded tremulously:

"Well, dear, let's wait—see if one of us is able to change."

Filled with a prophetic melancholy, they returned from the brook where the willows mourned above the transitory water, and the wild roses dispelled their perfume in the solitude.

That night Emily thought: "It will never be through him." And after a time: "Poor Virgil!"

How well she could have loved him, had it not been for ambition! Was it ever to end, that constant torment of restlessness, that almost intolerable yearning toward far-off places where human beings could become like demigods? There were times when she envied little Etta Tucker, whose placidity would never be broken by such feelings.

Then Inkley Grounds, traveling the countryside for a wholesale firm, dropped into Morleysville.

He was in his early twenties, a short, pudgy, red-faced fellow, solemn while all previous drummers had been prankish, drab in attire while the others had been flashy. Many would have thought him destined to a life of insignificance. But Emily perceived in Inkley Grounds something that clairvoyant persons must have discerned in the young Buonaparte even when France was still a foreign land to him.

And that appreciation was mutual. Brought face to face, those two souls instantaneously read each other's secrets, and felt themselves alone together amid the dynamic vibrations of their equal wills. Inkley Grounds' admiration of this beauty hastened his proposal; and Emily's full appreciation of his physical shortcomings did not delay her assent. On his next trip through the countryside he was to marry her.

The agitated minister wrote letters of inquiry, but Inkley's reputation proved unassailable. A sad resignation pervaded the parsonage. Then one evening, when the sun had set, Emily encountered Virgil Behan near the willow trees.

His face haggard from suffering, he blurted out:

"Don't do it, Emily. Dear Emily, don't do it. How can I live without you?"

On his lips those old words had the poignancy of something that had never been said before.

All the tenderness of Nature had been distilled into that

scene. The glory of the sky was waning. The mists were gathering to veil the trees. The brook lifted a soft murmur like a lament. In the breathless air the petals of the wild roses were falling one by one. The last light of the afterglow enveloped those two, as if trying with its failing strength to bind them to each other. And the familiar land, before fading into the night, sent forth its full perfume, to him so rich in lovely associations—its whole magic, which was too natural to reach her heart.

Suddenly Virgil Behan forgot the beloved shrine. Nothing was left for him but Emily, the precious idol, at whom he stared in a turmoil of fear and courage.

"Emily, if it's only the place, I'll give it up. I'll take you away, wherever you want to go, and we'll never come back."

It was too late. She had learned to contrast Virgil's artlessness with the mature insatiability of Inkley Grounds. She felt now that this touching lover, transplanted into the world, would always be, at least for her, a failure.

Then, for fear that out of pity she might throw her arms round his neck and kiss him, and be lost, she fled through the gloom, running faster and faster, away from love.

FOR five years the married pair lived economically in the State capital. Then Inkley Grounds, having gone into another business for himself, began to get his grip on fortune.

His pervision became uncanny. Men fell to wondering at his boldness, his invariable success, the extraordinary development of his enterprises. He proved to be one of those whose minds remain shut against the briefest thought of failure, and into whose lives, in consequence, defeat never dares to intrude.

The trickle of gold into his coffers became a torrent.

Now Emily's surroundings were in constant flux, one scene soon melting into a finer one, the moderate passing out of her life, to have its place taken by the elaborate and costly. At home her needs became complicated; her fastidiousness continually increased. At dinner, in the house that never seemed quite good enough, she fell silent, contemplating the future, which was to bring more wealth, more luxury, more prestige.

At such moments she passed in thought beyond her husband, to a place and time that even he could not have visualized.

Inkley Grounds looked shorter, pudgier and more rubicund than ever. This rich environment had not enriched his appearance in the slightest, or changed his character. He was too strongly self-centered to respond to such external influences. As it turned out, all his satisfaction was obtained in victory, not in the enjoyment of its fruits. And the luxury which, in a less rugged nature, would have produced refinement, and perhaps deterioration, was scarcely noticed by that mind engrossed like a monomaniac's with one idea—more power.

As for Emily, the handsomer her surroundings, the more beautiful she became. The rarer her life, the more subtle grew her ability to charm. It was as though the loveliness of the objects round her was being drunk in by her, transmuting her flesh into a finer material, informing her movements with a classic grace, imparting to her impulses a peculiar elegance.

Yet never for a whole hour was she quite happy.

The present, as soon as it had been secured, seemed to imprison her. She strained toward the future, where, in a shining mist, freedom and perfect joy lay hidden.

Consumed with jealousy of the figures that moved behind that mist, Emily packed her brain with the sort of knowledge that they had. She studied foreign languages, in which she proved exceptionally fluent. On her trips to Europe she obtained a superficial esthetic and political education. There too, after inspecting famous French châteaux or venerable Italian palaces, she pored over the pedigrees of foreign aristocracies. And when, over there, in the tea-rooms of the great hotels, she saw the princesses surrounded by their flatterers, there passed through her a strange thrill, cold and deep, like a vibration from a tomb.

Yes, there was one secret in her heart that Inkley Grounds never divined.

Presently, although she was more beautiful than ever, she began to dwell anxiously on her reflection in the mirror. She was seized with a dread of time. Through all her talks with her husband ran the voiceless urgency: "Hurry, hurry, hurry."

More wealth, more luxury, more prestige. But for what?

Inkley Grounds, familiar as he was with ambition, could not guess.



He stood there as a man

They had moved to New York, where Inkley was now powerful in the financial world. There Emily—she called herself Amélie now—had gained victories of her own. Yet she already scorned a society whose chief criterion of merit was money. In the night she heard voices that whispered to her: "Time is passing! Time is passing."

One afternoon Inkley Grounds, while addressing a directors' meeting, stopped short with a look of silly astonishment, for a moment glared into space as if trying to overawe some antagonist invisible to the others, then fell forward upon the table.

He had suffered a stroke.

Emily came to sit by his bed, a king's bed, its intricately carved structure elevated on a dais, its canopy of violet-colored satin heavy with patterns in gold. In this bed, on the verge of the Beyond, Inkley Grounds appeared physically smaller and more grotesque than ever. Now all his remaining forces were engaged in a subconscious combat with oblivion. The quiver of his dynamic will had ceased.



might stand before an apparition. It was she who ended the silence: "Don't you know me, Virgil?"

Could it be that this little, helpless creature had evolved so much splendor out of nothing?

The violet-colored night-curtains were drawn across the windows. Through the rosy lamplight, which spread in the elaborate room a faint, almost amorous glow, the white nurses moved noiselessly about their ineffectual business; the eminent physicians bent down their lustrous bald heads, which seemed overfreighted with the knowledge that they could not use.

Finally, since there was nothing more to be done for Inkley Grounds, they left the husband and the wife alone together.

She reflected on all the unsatisfying treasures that she had obtained through him. She could not help thinking of all that she still hoped to gain in consequence of his talents. But in this hour she did not want to think of that. What she wanted now was to give him, in requital for everything, one moment of real love. She whispered to his deaf ears:

"Have I been so impatient? Have I failed to appreciate you, and all you have done for me?"

She leaned toward him, exceedingly fair in her distress. She peered through the amorous lamplight at his pudgy face, striving to find there something that might quicken her to more than pity. And by a miracle of will she kissed him, for the first time in their relationship, without any repugnance.

SHE traveled, as the newspapers put it, to recuperate from her loss.

In Europe she regained the social scenes so inspiring to her because their luster had not been derived from wealth alone. Her heart swelled as she viewed from her carriage-window the sculptured coats-of-arms over the gates of palaces. In imagination she adorned herself with the parures that were handed down from bride to bride in noble families.

While visiting Rome, before she had left off her mourning, she met Prince Azzarossa.

In his youth Alessandro Azzarossa had been famous for his gambling, his romances and his duels. (Continued on page 124)

The Pursuit of an Arch Criminal by a Master Detective

The Kiss of Judas

By E. Phillips Oppenheim

SIR NORMAN GREYES, formerly of Scotland Yard, is devoting his life to tracking down an arch criminal of many aliases and disguises, but known to him as Michael Sayers. Among Sayers' secret abodes was a cottage near an English golf course where he was served by a housemaid named Janet and lived as "Mr. Stanfield." One day while Sir Norman, a guest at the golf-club, was



Sir Norman Greyes

playing the course with "Stanfield," Janet shot and killed a police officer who had tracked Sayers to the spot. The maid professed to her master and to Sir Norman complete ignorance, but later confessed to "Stanfield" and became his accomplice, as is told in the present story by Sir Norman.

Illustrated by
W. B. King

ON the evening of my return from the Riviera after a three months' holiday, I was accosted in the lounge of Marridge's Hotel by a middle-aged man of inconspicuous appearance who had been seated in a corner alone. It was some few seconds before I could recall him to my memory, but curiously enough a crowd of unpleasant associations gathered themselves together in my mind even before I had recognized him.

"You haven't forgotten me and our golf down at Woking, Sir Norman?" he asked.

I knew all about him then.

"Mr. Stanfield, isn't it?" I said. "No, I haven't forgotten."

I was a few minutes early for my party, and I accepted the offer of a cocktail from my golfing acquaintance.

"That was an extraordinary interruption to our first game," he remarked. "I never fancied my little house much afterward. I gave it up, in fact, within the year."

"I heard you had left," I told him.

"You had no luck in your investigations, Sir Norman?" he inquired.

I shook my head. The subject was still a sore one with me.

"I had no luck at all," I confessed. "I came to certain conclusions which carried me a little way along the road, but all the clues ended abruptly. Yet I don't despair. I always have the fancy that some day or other I shall solve that mystery."

The waiter brought the cocktails, and we raised our glasses.

"I drink, then, to that day, Sir Norman," my companion said.

"I am with you," I declared heartily.

We talked idly of various matters for a few moments—principally of golf, which I had been playing regularly in the south of France. There were several dinner-parties being given in the restaurant that evening, and some very beautiful women were in

evidence. One in particular attracted my attention. She was tall, slender, slim, beautifully made. Her complexion was perfect, although a little colorless. Her strange-colored eyes had a nameless attraction. Her hair, beautifully coiffed, was just the shade of brown which appealed to me. She bowed to my companion as she passed, and joined a little group at the farther end of the hall. The last thing I noticed about her was her wonderful string of pearls.

"That is a very beautiful woman," I remarked. "Do you know who she is?"

"A South American widow—De Mendoza, her name is."

"You know her?"

"My humble apartment is on the same floor as her suite," my companion replied. "She is gracious enough sometimes to remember the fact that we meet occasionally in the lift."

My friends arrived, and I made my adieux to my erstwhile golfing acquaintance. Somehow or other, my meeting with him had left an unpleasant impression behind it. It had forced my thoughts back to the humiliating recollection of the fact that the murderer of Richard Ladbroke still remained undiscovered, and that the man who had called himself Pugsley had walked away from detection under our very eyes and had never been heard of since.

Among my fellow-guests was an official of the Home Office, and our conversation naturally drifted into the subject of social order.

"Your connection with Scotland Yard having long since ceased, Sir Norman," he remarked to me, "you will not be oversensitive as to facts. The epidemic of crime which was raging about two years ago seems to have broken out again with exactly the same results. There are four undetected murders and five great robberies up to the debit of your late department. Your people believe that the same person is at the head of it who planned all those



"He is quaint, that little man," my companion remarked once. "He reminds me of those impossible characters one reads about, who detect crime for the pleasure of it."

robberies eighteen months ago and escaped arrest by shooting the inspector."

I affected to take only a casual interest in the information; but as a matter of fact, I was considerably moved. If the man who had last concealed his identity under the name of Pugsley, but whom I strongly suspected to be the notorious Michael Sayers, had really come out into the open once more, life would certainly possess a new interest for me during the next few months.

We were a party of six that evening—a celebrated criminal lawyer and his wife, my friend from the Home Office, with his wife and sister-in-law, and myself. The criminal lawyer, who was our host, heard scraps of our conversation and leaned forward.

"You did well to leave Scotland Yard when your reputation

stood high, Sir Norman," he said. "A new era of crime has dawned, and the struggle is no longer equal. It isn't the riffraff of the world today who take to murder and burglary. The skilled and conscienceless scientist has taken their place. The criminal of today, in nine cases out of ten, is of higher mental caliber than the detective who is opposed to him."

"The struggle should be the more interesting," I remarked vaguely.

It was a fancy of mine that my continued interest in my profession should remain as little known as possible, and I talked for some time on indifferent subjects to the lady who was seated by my side. We admired Mrs. De Mendoza and her gorgeous rope of pearls. My host intervened.

"It is women like that," he commented, "who choose to deck their bodies with jewels of fabulous value, who encourage crime.

"Roughly speaking, I dare say that necklace is worth eighty thousand pounds. For purposes of theft, it could probably be disposed of for fifty thousand. What a haul for the scientific thief! If it is really true that Pugsley is once more at work, what an opportunity!"

"A woman must be very brave," my hostess declared, "to run such risks."

"The jewels are probably in the hotel safe most of the time," I suggested. "I don't suppose she goes out in them."

Our host smiled.

"I can imagine Pugsley finding a few minutes in the hotel quite sufficient," he observed. "He or his successors, whoever they may be, would think little enough of human life by the side of, say, fifty thousand pounds. The modern maxim of the thief seems to be all or nothing. By killing at sight they certainly increase their chances of escape."

That closed our conversation upon the subject. We sat about in the lounge and drank coffee and liqueurs, danced for a time and smoked a few cigarettes. The party broke up as the lights in the lounge were being lowered. I was the only one of our little gathering remaining in the hotel, and I was talking for a few moments to the head porter, who was an old acquaintance of mine, when a man made a somewhat hurried entrance through the swing-doors and seemed on the point of proceeding to the office. As he saw me, however, he hesitated, and turning aside, addressed me.

"Excuse me, but are you Sir Norman Greaves?" he asked.

I admitted the fact.

"Can I ask you to give me five minutes of your time on a matter of urgent business?"

I looked at him with some surprise. His voice and address were good, and in appearance he differed in no respect from the crowd of diners who frequented the place. He drew a card from his pocket and handed it to me.

"It is an absurd hour, I know, to trouble you," he apologized, "but I can explain in a very few minutes if you will give me the opportunity."

I stepped underneath one of the electric standards and looked at the card—"Mr. Stanley Delchester."

Underneath was the name of a famous insurance company. I motioned him to follow me into the deserted lounge, and invited him to take a chair. I must say that he wasted no time in stating his business.

"Many years ago, Sir Norman," he reminded me, "when you were officially engaged at Scotland Yard, you saved our firm a great loss in the matter of the Hatton Gardens emerald theft."

"I remember it quite well," I admitted.

"We understand," my visitor continued, "that you have now resigned from the Force, but we hoped that you might be inclined to undertake a small commission for us. It came to the ears of our chief quite unexpectedly that you were staying here, and he sent me after you at once."

"I can at least hear what the business is," I replied.

"There is staying in this hotel," the insurance agent proceeded, "a Mrs. De Mendoza, the reputed widow of a fruit merchant in Buenos Aires. She is the fortunate possessor of a very wonderful pearl necklace, which she has insured with our firm for a hundred thousand pounds. Our acceptance of the policy was a grave error which we recognized almost immediately afterward. We know nothing of the lady, and under those circumstances it is against our business policy to accept the risk. We have done our best to protect ourselves, however. Since the policy was issued, we have kept in constant touch with her, and have been in daily communication with the hotel detective. By tonight's post, however, we had a message from the latter to say that he was at home ill, and that during his absence his duties would be taken over by the night watchman. The policy has only one more week to run, and will not under any conditions be renewed. We want to know if, for any fee which you care to name, you will do your best to guard the necklace for us during that week?"

"Have you had any intimation of thieves working in this neighborhood?" I asked him.

"None whatever," he replied. "I will be perfectly frank with you. It is not an ordinary robbery of which we are afraid. For some reason or other, our inquiry department has formed a dubious opinion of Mrs. De Mendoza herself."

"I see," I remarked. "You are afraid of a fraud."

"Precisely! Directly we received the letter from the hotel detective, we rang up the manager here. All that we could learn was that the illness was altogether unexpected, and that the man



had been compelled to go home at a moment's notice. In reply to our request that a trained detective might take his place, the management assured us that they considered nothing of the sort necessary. No robbery of jewels had ever taken place from this hotel, and they considered their night porter fully competent to watch over the interests of their guests."

I considered for a moment.

"Sir William Greaves, our manager, desired me to suggest a fee of two hundred guineas," my visitor concluded.

"I will accept the commission," I promised.

The next morning I interviewed the manager of the hotel, to whom I was well known. He showed some irritation when I spoke of Mrs. De Mendoza's necklace and her nervousness concerning it.

"To be quite frank with you," he confessed, "although Mrs. De Mendoza is a good client and pays her accounts regularly, I am inclined to be sorry that we ever let her the rooms."

"Why?" I asked.

"People with valuable jewelry should accept its possession with a certain resignation," he replied. "This is the last hotel in London where a jewel robbery would be likely. The lady herself, I understand, takes every possible care and caution. She wears her necklace nowhere except in the restaurant and lounge, and every night it is deposited in the hotel safe. I cannot see that she has the slightest cause for anxiety; nor do I understand the nervousness of the insurance company. However, you may rely upon it, Sir Norman, that every facility will be given to you in your task. I would suggest that you pay a visit to the lady herself."

The idea had already occurred to me, and later in the day I

sent up my card to Mrs. De Mendoza and was at once invited to enter her sitting-room. I found her writing letters, simply dressed in a black negligée and wearing the pearls. I was struck once more by the extreme elegance of her bearing and figure. As she turned and invited me to seat myself, she stirred in my memory a faint suggestion of reminiscence. I was not sure even then, however, whether it was a real person or a picture of which she reminded me. She listened to the few words with which I introduced myself, and smiled deprecatingly.

"It is true that I am very foolish," she admitted, "but then I have always been a person of superstitions. I have owned my necklace for some years, and I have had it with me in quite lawless places. I have never, however, felt just the same amount of apprehension as I do at the present moment."

The maid had recovered sufficiently to sit up. The empty jewel-case told its own story.



"That certainly seems strange," I replied. "The servants at this hotel are more carefully chosen than at any other hotel in London, and the guests are in nearly every case old clients."

She shrugged her shoulders.

"Apprehensions such as mine," she said, "are not based upon reason. However, I must confess that I feel more comfortable now that the insurance company has engaged your services. Would you not like to examine the pearls?"

She came over to my side, and without unclasping the necklace, let it rest in my hands. The pearls were all marvelously matched, all of considerable size, and with that milky softness which she pointed out to me as being a proof of their great perfection. As we stood there, necessarily close together, a wisp of her hair touched my forehead. Something in the timbre of her low laugh as she brushed it back induced me to look up. There were qualities about her smile and the peculiar expression of her eyes which gave me a momentary thrill. I understood at once why men turned their heads always to look at her. Notwithstanding her reserved appearance, she possessed that strange gift of allurements which Helen of Troy might have bequeathed to Mademoiselle de la Vallière.

"Do you admire my pearls?" she asked softly. I let them slip from my palm.

"They are very wonderful," I admitted.

She moved slowly away. I breathed more easily as the distance increased between us. She looked over her shoulder unexpectedly, and I believe that she realized my sensation. The slight frown passed from her forehead. She was obviously more content.

"Tell me how you propose to guard my treasures, Sir Norman?" she inquired as she sank into an easy-chair. "Shall you stand behind my chair at dinner, disguised as a waiter, and lie on my mat at night? It gives one quite a shivery sensation to think of such espionage!"

"Believe me," I assured her, "I shall not be in the least obtrusive. I understand that you send your pearls down every night to the hotel safe."

"I have always done so," she answered. "Do you think it would be better to keep them up here? Will you promise to sit in this easy-chair, with a revolver on your knee, all night, if I do so?"

"Not for the world," I declared. "The hotel safe is much the better place."

"I am glad to hear your decision," she said with a slight smile. "I should sleep very little if I thought that my pearls were near me—and that you were sitting here, on guard. The idea would be disturbing."

"One cannot guard against miracles," I observed, "but I think you can make your mind quite easy about the necklace. If you should need me at any time, the number of my room is Four-thirty-two."

"On this floor?"

"On this floor."

"Tell me," she asked a little abruptly as I rose to take my leave, "who was the man with whom you were talking last night in the lounge—a slim, middle-aged man with a very hard face? I am always seeing him in the lift."

"A man I know scarcely anything of," I replied. "His name, I believe, is Stanfield. I once played golf with him down at Woking."

"Stanfield?" she repeated. "Was it in his grounds near Woking that a murder was committed—a policeman was found shot there?"

I nodded. "I was playing golf with Mr. Stanfield at the time," I told her.

"And the murderer was never discovered?"

"Never!"

"I wonder you didn't take an interest in the case yourself," she remarked.

"I did," I told her.

She made a little grimace.

"My fears for my necklace are reawakened," she declared. "Surely it ought to have been an easy task for a clever man like you, one who used to be called a really great detective, to discover the murderer?"

"It is beyond my powers to bring him to justice, at any rate," I replied. "There are many criminals walking about today, of whose guilt the police are perfectly well aware. They cannot be arrested, however, for lack of evidence."

"How thrilling!" she murmured. "Will you ask me to dine with you some night and tell me some of your adventures?"

"I shall be happy to do so," I replied.

"Meanwhile—"

She accepted my departure a little un-

the lounge that evening, a premonition that life for the next few hours was going to be very interesting indeed.

At eight o'clock, precisely, Mrs. De Mendoza came into the lounge. She was wearing a white lace evening dress, with an ermine wrap which hung loosely around her, disclosing the pearls underneath. Her entrance made a mild sensation. Mr. Stanfield, who was seated in his accustomed corner, drinking his cocktail, watched our meeting and departure into the restaurant with obvious surprise.

"The little man was there again who stares at me so much—Mr. Stanfield, I think you called him?" she remarked as we took our places.

I nodded.

"I dare say he was surprised to see us together," I said. "I asked him who you were, on the night of my arrival here."

"Why?"

"For the same reason that a great many other people ask the same question," I replied.

She made a little grimace.

"You are determined to pay me no compliments this evening, and I am wearing my favorite gown."

"I admire your taste," I assured her.

"Anything else?"

"You are the best-dressed and the best-looking woman in the room."

"Too impersonal," she complained.

I turned the conversation to the subject of the necklace. The pearls were collected for her, she told me, by her husband, some in India, some in the Malay states, some in Paris, some in Rio. She spoke of him quite frankly—a prosperous fruit-broker who had achieved sudden opulence.

"It was quite as much a change for me as for him," she remarked. "I was a typist in Buenos Aires before we were married. I have known what it is to be poor."

She answered all my questions without reserve, displaying later on much interest in the recounting of such of my adventures as were public property. I began to feel that I had been mistaken with regard to her, that she was really exactly what she seemed—a very wealthy woman of adventurous type, suddenly released from matrimonial obligations and a little uncertain what to make of her life. We took our coffee in the lounge afterward. In the background my golfing friend, Mr. Stanfield, was seated, smoking a cigarette in a retired corner, and having the air of studying everyone who passed.

"He is quaint, that little man," my companion remarked once, as he glanced over toward us. "He reminds me of those impossible characters one reads about in magazines, who detect crime for the pleasure of it, and discover hidden treasures in absurd places."

"He is, as a matter of fact," I told her, "a retired city merchant with a passion for golf—at least, that is what the golf secretary at Woking told me."

The music was seductive, and presently we danced once or twice. In the ballroom, however, my companion showed signs of renewed nervousness. The fingers of one hand were nearly all the time straying around her neck, as though to assure herself that the necklace was still there. Presently she

drew me away with an apologetic little laugh.

"I am quite mad," she confessed, "but I have a fit of nerves tonight. I am going upstairs early. Do you mind?"

"Of course not," I told her. "Let me see you to the lift."

"I am going to ask you to do more than that," she said as we crossed the hall. "I am going to ask you to come up to my sitting-room and escort my maid down to the office when she takes my necklace there. As a reward you can come back afterward, if you will, and have a whisky and soda with me."

"I shall be very pleased," I acquiesced.

I rang for the lift, and we ascended together to the fourth floor. She handed me her key, and (Continued on page 108)



"The kiss of Judas," I warned her.
"You will need more than his cunning," she answered.

willingly. I am not a vain man, and I felt inclined to wonder at a certain graciousness of attitude on her part which more than once during our interview had forced itself upon my notice. I decided, however, that she was just one of those women who are born with the desire to attract, and dismissed the matter from my mind.

Later, about seven o'clock, a note was brought into my room:

Dear Sir Norman,

A lady and her husband who were dining, have disappointed me. Can you, by any chance, be my guest? If so, let us meet at eight o'clock in the lounge.

Hopefully yours,
Blanche de Mendoza.

I scribbled a line of acceptance. I felt, as I descended into

McCleod's Partner

By George Marsh

Illustrated by
Frank Schoonover

A HOWL, dying to a wail as of despair, from the shore of the island which he was passing, brought the paddle of McCleod to a stop. Slowly he swept the beach with shaded eyes. Again the light offshore breeze carried the agonized cry of a creature whom the sight of the canoe had seemingly aroused to a supreme effort. Then McCleod saw a dog moving along the beach at the water-line.

With a wide sweep of his paddle across the stern, he swung the craft inshore, and was approaching the island when the excited animal entered the water and started swimming toward the boat. McCleod beached his canoe, followed by the whimpering dog, who dragged himself with difficulty from the water.

Accustomed to the sight of half-starved Indian dogs through the summer months, nevertheless the emaciation of the animal drew from the man an exclamation of pity. Trembling with the exertion of swimming in his weakened condition, the dog, whining deliriously with joy, made his way unsteadily toward McCleod.

"So some low-down Ojibway deserted you to starve on this island, did he, old boy?" said the man as the dog shyly muzzled the outstretched hand, as if fearful of the blow which might repay his friendliness.

"A half-grown pup, and just about done!" McCleod stroked the hairy head and back, while the husky, now assured of the friendliness of the stranger, gazed up at him with eyes eloquent with gratitude, and from which all fear had faded.

McCleod ran his hands over the protruding shoulders and ribs, on which the skin hung loose.

"Nothin' but hair and bones, pup; the mice and rabbits must be scarce on this island, or else you've been here some time.





What do you say to a good thick stew?"

Filling his kettle, the man started a fire, but when he drew from a canvas bag in the canoe a piece of the haunch of a moose shot the day before, the odor of the fresh meat sent the famished puppy into a yelping frenzy. Giving the dog a few small bits, which merely whetted his hunger, McCleod cut up the meat and started the stew.

"When you've had a stomachful of that, boy, you'll feel better," he said, holding the dog from the fire, for the quivering nose, daring the heat, strained toward the noisy kettle from which odors most delicious to the nostrils of a starved puppy were rising.

Later the dog gulped down the life-giving brew, whining for more when he had emptied a small pail, for his need was great; but John McCleod was dog-wise. He had no intention of allowing this slate-gray and white puppy, whose big bones and fine head promised much for the future, to destroy himself by gorging.

That evening when McCleod made camp far up the lake, the dog was again fed with hot stew. And so rapidly was his strength returning that he found heart, before curling up beside the new master, to point his nose at the rising moon, in the manner of his kind, and send a husky challenge echoing across the silent waters.

AT Nepigon Lake the previous winter, John McCleod, for ten years prospector and trapper by turns, had learned from a half-breed of a small lake far to the north where outcroppings of strange-looking rock networked the slope of one of the shores. Close questioning of the Indian as to the appearance of the outcroppings had convinced McCleod that the Ojibway's "shining rock" was a surface showing of silver deposits. Married and settled at Nepigon House, the Ojibway refused, the following spring, to accompany the white man to the lake, but on a piece of birch-bark had traced the trail through a network of waters to his old trapping-grounds.

So, when the ice was gone from the rivers, McCleod had started alone into the north in quest of the nameless lake where, perchance, awaited him his long-sought fortune, or as was more probable, the discovery that the toil of another summer had been fruitless.

Early June had found him still traveling north following the vague directions of the Indian. Out of the silence, the cry for succor of one in extremity had reached him, and he took unto himself a friend and partner of his venture in the shape of the half-grown, totally miserable, husky puppy.

Day by day as McCleod traveled north through the baffling labyrinth of waterways which networks the wilderness between Nepigon and the lonely valley of the Albany, nourishing food worked its miracle in his shaggy comrade, whose bony frame rapidly filled out.

Doomed to have warped and grown wolfish from ill treatment and scant food, the nature of the husky, who for the first time

"I'll fight you for him, here and now—bare fists, knife or gun."

in his life knew kindness from man, expanded in that short month with John McCleod.

Because of love for the caress of the big hand, the sound of the deep-voiced approbation, the puppy soon learned to obey the commands of the new master. The stick played small part in his education. And because he had found the dog while on a lone quest into the silent places and shared with him his food and fire, and because at night in camp under the June stars the puppy would sit, hairy ears erect, worship in his slant brown eyes, while the bearded master talked to him, as to a human, of his hopes and plans, McCleod named the puppy Pard.

But as June wore into July and the wanderings of the two continued over lake and portage and stream far toward the Albany valley, McCleod realized that, somewhere behind, he had left the Indian's trail. The chain of small lakes which the Ojibway had described so minutely had been passed either to east or west, for he had traveled many weeks in a northerly direction. So he swung back southeast and spent the month of August searching for the Indian's lakes, but at length turned back baffled.

By September he had come out on the age-worn portages of the old Albany trail from Nepigon, trampled for centuries by the feet of the red man. For weeks McCleod had been living on the country, without flour, tea or tobacco. But so long as there were moose in the "bush" and pike and doré in the lakes, McCleod had no fear of starvation for himself and Pard. However, the winter was not far off, and he was two hundred miles from Nepigon.

A week's travel north lay Fort Hope. He might find an Indian there who knew the country of the Ojibway's tale. At any rate he would go to the Hudson's Bay Company's post, buy flour and tobacco, return by the Nepigon trail, and make one more try for the lake of the "shining rock." Then he would have to race the "freeze-up" to Nepigon House. So he took the trail to Fort Hope.

Week by week through the summer McCleod's partner had been accumulating bone and sinew and height. It was evident that the famished puppy of June had sprung from a noble parentage. Already he was larger in frame than the average sled-dog, and his jaws, now grown massive, had developed a set of white fangs which a timber wolf might envy. Through the long summer days the friendship of man and dog had ripened.



To the puppy the man had become the center and sum of life, all other living things of forest and air but the objects of his mad pursuit. In the heart of the lonely man, the dog, gallant partner of his wanderings, had taken the place of a child.

Quick to learn, the puppy had, for the love of this man, mastered a well-nigh overpowering instinct inherited from wolfish forbears; for he would now bring into camp the snowshoe rabbits he had stalked, fighting down the desire to tear them to pieces where he made his kill. He also had a fashion of his own for displaying the affection which drove the blood racing through his veins at sight of the master. Baring his fangs in mock anger, he would launch himself headlong at McCleod, and seizing a hand in jaws that never closed, raise his slant eyes to the bearded face while his shaggy throat swelled and rumbled with the love he struggled to express. And the man often knelt with arms circling the husky's neck, his face against the dog's, and as he rubbed one of the hairy ears, mutter into the other: "You old son-of-a-gun, I wouldn't give ten cents for your old hide. I hate you, don't I?"

In the course of a week John McCleod paddled up to the little settlement of log buildings of the Hudson's Bay Company, where the great Albany river widens into Eabemet Lake, known as Fort Hope. As he led his excited puppy up to the trade-house through the pack of snarling post huskies, which he kept off with a paddle, McCleod inwardly thrilled at the bearing of Pard, who, with hair on end and fangs exposed in challenge to the dogs of the settlement, strained at his leash to come to close quarters with the threatening brutes.

The riot of the dogs drew the loungers from the trade-house, curious as to visitors so late in the year, when the hunters were already on their winter trapping-grounds.

"Good day!" said a red-bearded man, evidently the factor.

"Good day!" returned McCleod. "I want some stuff, but your dogs will eat this pup up; where can I put him?"

"Close the stockade gate, Sandy," ordered the factor of one of the group, "and let the dog run inside." Then he turned to McCleod. "I'm Robert Findley, in charge here, and what may be your name, sir?"

"John McCleod, from Nepigon Lake. I've been prospecting down below this summer and am taking the trail back."

The men shook hands. As they talked of the fur, of the great silver strike over at Cobalt, of the gold discovery on the Porcupine, a half-breed strolled up to them.

"Bo'-jo'!" he grunted.

"Bo'-jo'!" returned McCleod, noting the small, close-set eyes which gave the swart face an expression of low cunning.

"Were you get dat husky?" demanded the 'breed, watching the active Pard busy exploring the interior of the stockade.

The tone of the speaker carried more than admiration for the big puppy.

McCleod looked hard into the shifting, minklike eyes and drawled:

"Oh, down Nepigon way. —I figure he'll go well over a hundred pounds when he gets his growth." This last to Findley. "Yes, he's a rare dog for these parts," said the factor. "Looks like an Ungava strain in him!"

The half-breed, still following Pard intently with his eyes, threw out presently: "I t'ink dat dog my pup; I lose one las' spreeng."

McCleod felt the blood heat in his veins. If this 'breed was the callous Ojibway who had deserted the starved puppy, he ought to be kicked into the lake. As for recognizing any ownership on the part of the Indian now, he had no thought.

"That dog is mine! You understand?" He turned fiercely on the half-breed. "If you think he's your dog, go up to him and see if he remembers you."

At the sound of the master's deep voice, hoarse with passion, Pard, ears erect, trotted up to the group.

With hand extended, the Indian approached the husky, coaxing in Ojibway—whereupon the hair rose on neck and back of the puppy and his white fangs bared in a snarl. The 'breed stopped in his tracks.

"That proves it; he aint your dog!" rasped McCleod, stepping between the Indian and the dog.

"Dat my pup for sure! Same spot on de head, same white foot!" insisted the half-breed. "I lose heem las' spreeng after de ice, on Nepigon trail."

McCleod realized that the Ojibway might be speaking the truth, but he would as soon have parted with his right arm as give up the dog he had snatched from the ruthless maw of the wilderness and learned to love.

"Well, that's the wrong dog, then," he said, "for I got him at Nepigon Lake."

"Ah-ha!" persisted the Indian, still studying the markings of Pard. "Dat my dog, for sure!"

"Well, you say he's your dog, and I say he's mine," roared the maddened white man, thrusting his face close to the swart visage before him. "There's only one way to settle it. I'll fight you for him, here and now—bare fists, knife or gun. Take your choice!"

The half-breed coolly ran an experienced eye over the big-shouldered Scot, then slowly shook his head, declining the challenge.

"All right, then," rasped McCleod, "he's my dog!" He turned to Findley, who had been an amused spectator. "Now, Mr. Findley, I want to buy some stuff."

IN the trade-house that night McCleod talked late with an old post Indian, a pensioner of the Company. On being questioned, the Indian thought he had run across the "lake of the shining rock" years before and remembered the peculiar outcropping. After much talk he persuaded the prospector that he had cruised all summer too far to the east and showed him by tracings how he could traverse the country by a different water-route back to Nepigon.

But before McCleod turned into his blanket, he had decided that if he did not find the lake before the "freeze-up," he would make a central winter camp, run some trap-lines and then seek his goal on snowshoes, if he had to search until spring. The old Ojibway's description of the lake and the strange surface showing of ore tallied so squarely with the story of the shining rock heard at Nepigon that he was now convinced that somewhere in that wide wilderness to the south his fortune awaited him. He was not the man to mark time, trapping at Nepigon, waiting for spring, in order to avoid risk of starvation and the added toil which he would face by wintering right in the heart of the baffling solitude within whose limitless timbered hills was hidden the lake of his hopes.

The following morning McCleod stowed away two big sacks of flour and a supply of beans, tea, salt and sugar in his canoe, together with extra blankets, traps and ammunition. This, with game as his chief food, would see him through the winter if failure to find the lake he sought held him in the bush.

Finally he shook hands with Findley and his clerk and pushed off, with Pard seated in the bow of the canoe snarling a farewell challenge to the post dogs on the beach.

"Good-by, Findley!" he said, waving at the group of Company men.

"Good-by! Good luck, McCleod!"

As the prospector paddled off down Eabement Lake, a sullen-faced half-breed muttered to a Company man: "Dere go my dog!"

That afternoon, earlier than was his custom, McCleod turned

into the shore, far down the river. Unloading his canoe he carried boat and cargo back from the beach into the bush. Then he made Pard fast to a spruce deep in the forest.

At first the puppy fretted in protest, for he knew that this procedure meant a still hunt, but he had been taught not to howl when tied; so after his ear had been rubbed and he had been called names which to Pard were love-words, the dog ceased his whining. Giving the husky his supper, McCleod returned to his canoe, where he made no fire, but ate some bread and cooked meat brought from the post, took his rifle and concealed himself on the shore.

BUT it was a long vigil. Hours passed, and the man whose keen eye constantly swept the upper reaches of the river began to doubt.

Slowly, while he waited, the splendor of the sunset, gilding timbered ridges, faded into the northern twilight. But the flat river surface lay like a floor, unrippled by moving thing.

The man in the willows rose, stretched his stiff limbs and slowly shook his head.

"Queer," he muttered. "I'd have bet my head on it!"

Gradually, in patches, the forest of the opposite shore darkened with dusk, but the light still held on the river.

Suddenly the man flattened out and cocked his rifle. A quarter-mile upstream a canoe was slowly rounding a point. The occupant stood erect, seemingly searching the river below him.

"Lookin' for the smoke of my fire," chuckled McCleod.

Keeping well behind the current, the canoe drifted downstream. Then the paddler dropped to his knees and quickened his pace.

He was abreast of the man in the willows and within easy range, when the shore echoed with the report of a rifle.

The Ojibway's paddle fell from his hands into the water, its blade shattered by a bullet. In a flash the half-breed lunged from sight into the bottom of the boat.

Again the willows spat a shaft of red. The bow of the light craft swung off the current from the impact of a bullet at the water-line. The man on shore, who had the Ojibway at his mercy, was amusing himself.

A third time he fired, perforating the stern, and still again, drilling the bow at the water-line.

Then, an arm reached over the gunwale of the boat, and a hand, used as a paddle, slowly turned the light craft toward the shore opposite the ambush, as the canoe drifted downstream and disappeared.

McCleod rose to his feet shaking with silent laughter. "There goes the most scared Ojibway on the Albany," he said aloud, "and the holiest canoe. I must have put four shots clean through her right at the water; he'll be wet before he gets ashore. Thought he could sneak my camp and take Pard, did he? Nice time he'd 'a' had puttin' that pup in a canoe."

On his way to the dog, which he found chafing with excitement at the rifle-shots, McCleod considered his next move.

If he camped where he was, the half-breed would have no difficulty in ambushing him, if he dared attempt it, when he passed downriver the following morning. So he brought the dog to the shore, loaded the canoe, and when it was dark, started.

He had traveled hardly a mile when Pard lifted his nose, vigorously sniffed the air, and burst into a frenzy of yelping.

Then a rifle flashed from the murk of the shore and a bullet whined past the stern of the boat.

"Oh, you're there, are you, you red dog-killer!" taunted McCleod. "Too bad I didn't put some lead into you when I could see you!"

Evidently the shot in the dark was merely a theatric display of the half-breed's chagrin, for it was not repeated.

McCleod dropped a few miles downstream and camped. When he rolled into his blanket, he said to the dog curled beside him: "Well, boy, I guess anybody who tries to steal you from John McCleod will know he's been in a fight, hey?"

For answer, the husky hunched himself nearer the man, who felt the rough surface of a warm tongue on face and neck.

THROUGH early October the ax of McCleod rang from dawn to dusk in a race with the approaching freeze-up. Again balked of his desire by the baffling hinterlands, after a hurried search along the water-route described by the Fort Hope Indian, he had chosen a site for his winter camp on a lake where the fishing was good, and in the center of the country he intended to explore. While he labored on the shack, his gill-net daily increased the store of fish on his platform cache set on spruce saplings—for he needed all he could (*Continued on page 92*)



The man buried his bearded face in the hairy neck of his friend Though the head and shoulders of the dog were caked with blood, there was no mark of claw or tooth on him.

Illustrated by
Howard Chandler Christy

Souls For Sale



By

Rupert Hughes

The Story So Far:

BEAUTIFUL young Remember Steddon—whose clergyman father had named her after one of the Puritan maidens of the *Mayflower*—found herself in desperate difficulties. She had given her heart to Elwood Farnaby, with whom she sang of Sundays in the choir of her father's small-town church; and because Elwood's drunken father left him the sole support of his mother and the younger children, young Farnaby could not marry her. But for some time now, Remember had known there was urgent reason for the marriage.

Remember's anxiety aggravated the cough which of late had worried her parents, so that at length they prevailed upon her to consult Doctor Bretherick concerning it; and the wise old physician soon discovered the true source of her trouble—and persuaded Remember to accept the obvious solution: in spite of the many material difficulties, and even though Elwood had lost his job, Remember must marry him at once. Bretherick had arranged the whole matter when—Farnaby was brought to his office dying, after an automobile accident.

Bretherick now ordered the broken-hearted girl West because of that cough, and told her how she was to write her parents successive letters telling of her meeting with an old acquaintance, of her falling in love with him, marrying him—and being left soon a widow.

Remember agreed to this. But she confided in her mother; and that much-tried good woman gave her longed-for absolution and solace, and became fellow-conspirator in Bretherick's scheme of a pretended marriage to explain matters to her father.

So Remember Steddon set out for Tucson—and an extraordinary career—a career which began even as Remember journeyed westward; for on the train she encountered several motion-picture actors, and the acquaintances she made with vulgar little Viva d'Artoise and with the handsome young star Tom Holby were to mean much to her.

On the train also Remember wrote the first letter of her fabrication to her father, which told of meeting an old acquaintance, Mr. Woodville. She planned to carry the story out in her letters from Tucson. But—to her consternation—when she stepped from the train she was greeted by a local clergyman, the Reverend Galbraith, whom her father had wired to meet her.

For some days Remember endured the unwelcome chaperonage of the Galbraiths. Then a fortunate chance took them out of

town, and Remember seized the opportunity: she wrote to her parents, announcing that she had married the fictitious Mr. Woodville and that she was going with him to Yuma; she likewise left a note for the Galbraiths, repeating the fiction of her marriage; and she then, after purchasing a wedding ring—and a little mourning apparel—took train for Yuma.

Arrived there, she wrote her parents that she was going with her husband on a prospecting trip into the desert; then she journeyed to Palm Springs, intending to seek employment as chambermaid at a hotel there. But at Palm Springs she encountered Tom Holby and his moving-picture company, out "on location," and Tom found temporary employment for her as an "extra woman." She misinterpreted and repulsed his merely friendly advances, however, and when the company went away, he left her to her own devices.

Remember found employment as a domestic on a ranch near by. Wandering up a steep path one day, she fell over a cliff and was badly hurt. She recovered—and was told by the physician that her expectations of motherhood would not be realized.

Some time afterward, entering a drugstore, at Palm Springs, she encountered a man she had met in Yuma, and who would expect her husband to be with her.

CHAPTER XXV

THE chief dismay of Remember was her inability to get rid of the lie she had begun. She found it always ahead of and about her with new demands, always behind her with new reminders.

She was lost as in a desert; on all sides of her was barren waste, with no oasis in sight—every refuge a mirage. Obscure in obscurity, she was overtaken by a casual stranger whom she had met in a Yuma boarding-house and had talked to for half an hour.

She stole out of the drugstore with the prescription unfilled, and hastening down the street, asked a young Indian girl who came along, to finish her errand for her. She waited in the shelter of a fat tree ready to take flight if the Yuma man should come out and follow her.

But he was evidently still telling the weary druggist his unsolicited experience, for after a time the Indian girl returned,



In spite of her struggles, Remember was snatched from her chair into the arms of this faun whose manly beauty was his stock in trade.

bringing the medicine and explaining that her delay was due to the much palaver of a man who would not stop talking.

On the way back to the Dack cottage, Remember thought fast. She had hidden herself in a tiny hamlet, the nearest thing to solitude. She had hidden herself in vain. The only other hope was to seek concealment in a crowd, as Tom Holby had suggested. This new coercion, added to the allurements of Los Angeles, determined her upon immediate action. She told Mrs. Dack and Mrs. Reddick that she had received a call to go to Los Angeles at once.

Mrs. Reddick protested and pleaded with all the hospitality that is bestowed on a good servant where servants of any sort are hard to get and keep. Mrs. Dack could only regret her departure, and her meek desolation of mien almost overcame Remember's resolution. The boy Terry was out of danger, but his arms around Remember's neck were withes she could hardly break. The soft hands, the dewy cheeks, the lonely eyes of children are fetters cruelly tyrannous.

Yet Remember dared not risk discovery. The next morning she took up her new exile. She lugged her old suitcase to the starting point of the auto-stage. It carried her and a few other

passengers across a bad-lands, pallid as a convict's cheek and with the same ill-shaven look.

At Whitewater she caught a train that sped her gradually into the vales of plenty, through leagues of citrus groves in flower and in fruit at once. She saw orange blossoms abloom in leagues, and blushed to think that she had never worn them. She marveled at the alleys of green, polka-dotted with golden oranges, with lemons and grapefruit hanging like gifts in tinsel Christmas trees. Long reaches of walnut groves went by in wheel-spokes; the walnuts made the neatest and shapeliest of orchards. There were olives, almonds. She saw roses blowing in red miles along the country roads. She was coming up into paradise.

And eventually she reached the new Babel, Los Angeles, which her father had denounced as the last capital of paganism. No city could be so wicked as her father and she thought Los Angeles, and be anything else.

Scanty as Remember's resources were, she had to pay a taxicab to take her to Leva's home. It was the first taxicab she had ever ridden in, and she was hysterical with fear as it shot and spun through

streets so thick with traffic and so wild that this city's record of accidents had achieved supremacy in the world.

Suddenly the car swerved to the right and scooted up a little avenue of low houses, not white only, but pink or mauve or yellow, with roofs of varicolored tile, and awnings of gaudy stripe.

The cab jolted to a stop before a tiny palace of four or five rooms. Remember got out, paid the pirate a fortune for ransom and lugged her suitcase up to the quaint little door.

This was Leva's home! She had a palm tree, a pepper tree, a few truculent cactuses, grass and a fountain. Along the walk stood a row of palms, their trunks studded or lapped in many facets where leaf-stalks had been cut off. A gorgeous vine of bougainvillea was flung up over the cornice with the effect of a vast carnival shawl.

Leva was not at home. A servant who opened the door said that she would not "git back from the stoddio befo' six or hupast."

Remember asked permission to wait, knowing nowhere else to turn; she studied the bright rooms as if they were chambers in fairyland. She could hardly comprehend the patio, and the

walls of concrete (she did not realize that she could almost have poked her thumb through them), the garden built into the house, the light and many-tinted furniture, the photographs of famous paintings that she had never heard of. The whole spirit of the place was foreign to Remember. It looked genie-built.

The servant was glad to relieve her loneliness with chatter. She explained that Miss Lemaire lived there with three other ladies, all of them in the movies and none of them getting their pictures took.

They lived here with no more thought of chaperonage than a crowd of bachelors. Remember's greatest shock was the abrupt arrival in a world where the enjoyment of life was made its chief business. She had been brought up to believe in duty first; in self-denial, abstinence, modesty, demurity, simplicity, meekness, prayer, remorse. Here people worshiped the sun, flowers, dancing, speed, hilarity, laughter and love.

They worked hard, but at the manufacture of pretty things, of stories, pictures, paintings, music. To her there was an inconceivable recklessness of consequence. They thought no more of respectable appearance than South Sea Islanders.

Yet they seemed to be as happy as they tried to be. They had their disappointments, jealousies, scandals, gossips, griefs and shames, but so had the gray village people she had left. They had no winter in this climate or in their souls—only a little rainy season, a bit of chill.

She stood as dazed as a missionary witnessing her first hula dance. It terrified and horrified her; yet it shook her blood with strange quivers and emotions.

When Leva's friends came in at dinner-time they came like young business men home from offices, tired of shop, yet full of its talk, eager for amusement, knowing no law except their own self-respect for health or reputation or efficiency. The first one in set a phonograph to playing a jazz tune before she noticed Remember. The second one in joined the first in a dance. They quarreled over a new step with laughing violence.

Whether Remember had come to her ruin or her redemption, she had come to a new world. Before she learned how freely, with what masculine franchise these women conducted their lives, before she could recoil from such perilous associations, she was entrapped in their cordiality, their vivacity, their lavish kindness.

Leva, the third one home, welcomed Remember as if she were a returned prodigal sister instead of a passing acquaintance met in the desert. She would listen to nothing but the unpacking of the suitcase and the acceptance of a little bed covered with a gaudy Navajo blanket. There were flowers at Remember's plate, in a lavish heap. And a big basket of fruit was set in her room.

The other women came in variously. One walked. One drove her own car up into a garage just a little bigger than the car. One was set down by a big studio touring-car that delivered its passengers of nights and gathered them up again of mornings, for Los Angeles is a city of maleficent distances. Every place is a Sabbath Day's journey from every place else. And there is no Sabbath—at least no legal Sabbath. Yet the people seemed to be extraordinarily good and kindly. They seemed to get the sun into their lives. Their hearts felt as big and golden and juicy as their own oranges. Even the lemons had a sweeter acidity than at home.

At home "California fruit" had been a byword for bigness, high color and insipidity of taste, something a little better than Dead Sea fruit. The smaller, plainer native apples, pears and peaches had possessed a better flavor. But California fruit had reached Calverly after a long dark journey and it was eaten in a foreign air. Out here, however, where the oranges could be lifted warm from the tree, the figs sliced fresh for breakfast, the peaches stripped of their downy silk while their wine was new, there was no lapse from the joyous promise of their advertisement.



If the sunlight was of a gold refined and somehow enriched, the shadow was also of a deeper cool. Just inside its edge the sun was walled out. The first builders had not known this. They had set above their houses the rooms of wintry climates, and one might still see in older Los Angeles obsolete homes whose slanting shingles were excellently arranged to let the snows slide off. Since there was no snow to slide, they served as furnaces for the hot sun. Next came the low roof with the wide, flat eaves, casting a heavy shade about the windows. But this made the houses chilly, and the new school brought the tiles just to the brim of the walls, and these walls were not often glaring white as before, but brown, dove-gray, salmon, shrimp, olive.

Where the shadows lay along the lawns or the walks, they were of unusual design, not dappings of rounded leaves as in the Middle West, but the long scissored slashes of palm-fronds, the thready reeds of papyrus, the pepper's delicate flounces.

Even in this Eden, however, there was distress and anxiety. The hard times that were freezing the outer world were threatening the raging prosperity of Los Angeles. From the Golconda of the moving-picture world, where everything had been gold and the most stupid asses acquired the Midas touch, the magic was vanishing.

Studios were closing overnight. Supposed millionaires were departing abruptly in search of funds to meet their pay-rolls. Stars who had been collecting ten thousand dollars a week or less were left stranded in the midst of unfinished pictures and unfinished mortgages and jewelry bills. The lesser fry were being cast ashore in heaps, like minnows after a tidal wave's recession.

The girls at Leva's were wondering how long their jobs would last. A mere cut in salary would be a welcome mercy, a respite from a death-sentence.

This was devastating news to Remember, for she had landed on this tropical isle in the expectation of at least a breadfruit tree. Her blanched face told her story to Leva, who held out more hope than she inly entertained.

"Never say die, Mrs. Woodville," she said. "There's always a chance. The companies are turning off their oldest, most experienced people in droves, but every now and then they take in a newcomer. I'll speak to the laboratory chief. Anyway, your board and lodging won't cost you anything as long as we've got either here, eh, girls?"



While she waited, her eyes were whipped with such sights that she was anesthetized by shock. Mothers, fathers, skeletal elders paraded among infants and boys and girls, and none of them decently clothed.

The girls agreed. Their adventurous spirit included a reckless hospitality and they put off care till tomorrow in the hope that it would never come.

After the dinner the phonograph was set whirring again, and Remember was invited to forget her troubles in a fox-trot. She gasped at this. She had never learned even a lamb-trot. Her father's church did not permit dancing, and while it overlooked the sin in certain of its parishioners, there would have been scandal indeed if the parson's daughter had ever lifted her foot in aught save solemnity.

But Remember was not allowed to explain. She was dragged

from her chair and forced to copy the steps set before her. It would have been impossibly priggish to plead religious scruples.

The dance-mood was innate, and she had a natural grace of rhythm that had languished unheeded. The steps were simple, and their combination at the whim of the dancer who led. Remember was soon whirling about the room, with more or less awkwardness, which only made for laughter, and with a swimming intoxication that left her panting and dizzy, but strangely, foolishly happy. She had learned a new alphabet of expression. She misspelled the words and jumbled her syntax, but she was getting along somehow on a new planet.

When three or four men drove up in a car and invaded the house with invitations to a dance at the Hollywood Hotel, Remember declined, of course. Her refusal was ignored as of no importance.

"It's Thursday night," said Leva, "and it's our religious duty to show up at the Hollywood. Everybody's there. You might meet somebody who'd give you a job."

Remember begged to be excused. She could not dance, and she was very tired.

"That's when you're at your best," cried Leva, who was an entirely other woman from the shrouded Arabian that Remember had met at Palm Springs.

While Remember protested, Leva motioned one of the men, a young actor, to make her dance.

In spite of her struggles she was snatched from her chair into the arms of this faun whose manly beauty was his stock in trade. It was the first time any man except her father and her brothers had embraced Remember since Elwood Farnaby had thrilled her with his love. She did not count the brief duel with Tom Holby in Palm Cañon, since he had made no effort to overwhelm her resistance.

But this laughing satyr held her tight and compelled her to dance. She was as frightened as Proserpina when the subterranean god seized her and carried her off to Hades. But her battles were as vain, and there was no help to be had from appealing to the laughing, applauding company of women.

Leva realized at length that Remember was being tortured, and checked the dance. Giddy with the whirl, and sullen with the outrage, Remember's anger blazed into open disgust.

The young man said he was horribly sorry, and only meant it in fun, and by his abject contrition made Remember ashamed of herself. She did not know what to do or say. The hilarity had become a funeral, and everybody slunk out of the house, whipped, leaving Remember alone.

THIS was Remember's first experience of the confusion that comes from being too dignified on a holiday. Her precious dignity looked odious now to the Puritan, and she felt that she owed a groveling apology to the wicked crew that had tried to destroy her.

To escape from the scene of her killjoy boorishness (as it looked to her now), she went out into the moonlit patio. The moon seemed to make life simpler. It had a way of blotting the material details with dumb shadow, and spreading a lovelight over dreamy surfaces. From a house somewhere near and drowned in foliage came a music of guitar and ukulele and young voices.

An automobile went by, trailing laughter like a glittering scarf. Over her head a palm tree waved an aromatic fan as over a daughter of Pharaoh. Along the northern sky the mountains were aligned, built of some soft-tinted cloudiness as if they were a wall decreed between this Xanadu of all delights and the harsh, respectable realms of the East, a barrier between the woeful lands of shagbark and mock-orange and this garden of almond trees and roses.

In a radiance so amorous that it seemed almost to coo, Remember felt that the one great need of her life was love, tenderness, rapture. This yearning was divine in this light. In the bright lexicon of the moon there was no such word as "Don't!" Everything wooed everything. In Remember's downcast eyes her bosom was silvered with the glamour and gathered into the same thought that mused upon wall and flower and tree, upon the deeps of the sky and upon the nearest vine-leaf a-quake with the ecstasy of being alive at night.

The air was velvety with a luscious fragrance that delighted her nostrils and drew her eyes to an orange tree, almost a perfect globe in symmetry and curiously forming a little universe whose support was lost in the gloom beneath. In the round night of its own sky hung moons exhaling perfume and temptation.

Like another Eve, she yielded to the cosmic urge and put her hand forth to the tree of knowledge, plucked the fruit that was not hers, and made it hers.

She did not peel the cloth of gold and divide the pulp, but as she had seen these Californians do, buried her teeth in the ruddy flesh, tore out a hole and drained the syrup.

She was too well schooled in Biblical lore not to think of Eve. There was, however, no Adam for her to involve in her fall; so she took the whole fruit for herself. But then, instead of feeling shame as the scales fell from her eyes, shame itself fell from her, and she laughed. Eve had become Lilith for the moment.

She felt in her heart that there was something wrong here

in this new life. But then, there had been so much wrong in the life she had led before. This was a city of peril, but she had not escaped peril at home. She breathed deep of the new freedom. She cast off her past, resolved to bend her head and her back no longer under remorse, but to stand erect, to run and dance, and to be beautiful and rich and famous.

Like Eve, she felt that the first necessity of her new era was clothes. If she had had any, she would have called a taxicab and dashed away to the Hollywood Hotel. She felt that she could dance with anybody or with nobody. She could be Salome and dance herself into half a kingdom, dance everybody's head off, including her own.

But it has been so arranged that whenever a woman is set on fire with a high resolution to do some glorious thing, an elbow-demon always brings her back to the dust by whispering: "You have nothing fit to wear." Otherwise the conquest of the world would not have been left to blundering, hesitant males. Remember could not go to the dance. She could not go anywhere in what trousseau she had, except to bed. At all costs she must beg, borrow or charge some clothes.

She went into the house. The moon was all very well for beautiful moods, but it was impractical; it did not provide the wardrobe for the deeds it inspired. She went into the house like a prisoner granted a little exercise in a walled yard, then driven back to her cell. She was awake in her perplexities when Leva and her friends came home. The young men raided the ice-box, then went their way.

Leva was so drowsy that she could hardly get her hair down, but she sat on the edge of Remember's bed and discussed the future. She mentioned the fact that Tom Holby had been at the hotel, dancing with Robina Teele, who was looking extraordinarily beautiful, thanks to a glorious new gown.

She did not realize that this idle comment filled Remember's heart with a number of cholla cactus spines that would fester there. Remember merely said:

"Speaking of clothes, what on earth am I going to do? Everybody in this town dresses like a duchess. I have no money, no credit; what can I do? I'm not fit to be seen."

Leva advised new duds by all means and offered to have them charged to her own account until Remember could find a job and begin to pay. It was harrowing to Remember to think that she must take on a burden of large debt before she could hope for small wages. But the need was imperative. The only alternative was to telegraph home for money, and that involved such appalling disclosures that she could not consider it.

It was bitter subjection to accept so much of Leva's generosity, but Leva would listen to no apologies:

"Everything worth while that ever came to me came through somebody's kindness, and I'm much obliged to you for the chance to pay off a little installment on the mortgage on my soul. Now shut up and go to sleep."

CHAPTER XXVI

NEXT morning Remember acquired on tick the brief trousseau of a little business bride. Then she went to the studio with Leva, and was assigned without delay to the laboratory projection-room, at twenty-five dollars a week.

The size of the studio astounded Remember. It was a vast factory. This one company's assets were thirteen million dollars, its last year's gross income eight millions. In a score of years a toy unknown before had become the fifth largest industry in the world, a mammoth target for every sort of critic.

Remember entered the art machine-shop and became a working woman with office-hours. It was hard to be on time, and she suffered frantic anxieties nearly every morning as she fled like a tardy school-child, dreading the gatekeeper's frown. His mark on his time-book was as terrifying as a recording angel's black mark.

It was hard to train her soul to the regularity and the length of work-hours. Yet the task was extraordinarily varied and picturesque. All day she sat in a dark room and ran a little projecting-machine that poured out moving pictures before her on a little private screen. She must watch out for typographical errors, a "to" for a "too," a slip of grammar, a mistake in an actor's or a character's name. Her common school education was good enough for this, though it was by no means so marvelous as Leva had told her employers it was.

Later Remember was permitted to study the film for blemishes, scratches, dust-specks, bad printing, bad tinting, bad assembly, bad any one of a score of things.



She tried to play the vampire. "I'll pay the price. I know what it costs to succeed."

There were five other young women besides Leva engaged at the same task, each with her little projection-machine and her little screen and her little picture racing ahead of her past the continual night of the laboratory. At one end of the projection-room was a large screen for the laboratory chief (a learned scientist) and his assistants, and occasional directors who came with problems of photography requiring immediate solution.

The conversation was in a foreign language to Remember, but the jargon grew gradually familiar and she kept an eager ear alert for information. She decided to master the trade in every detail.

It was fascinating at first—a strange and fairy business.

Like a chorus of girls at spinning wheels these spinsters sat and unrolled from their magic distaffs romance unending and of infinite variety.

Remember was supposed to keep her mind on her own screen, but it was impossible not to glance at the other pictures. They flung out and caught the eye like well-cast fishhooks.

She gasped to see Tom Holby's face suddenly move before her, seeming to peer into the dark to find her and wonder at her. She learned that he was away again on location. She might have been tempted else to seek him out and tell him that she had entered into his life and was zealous for adventure.

He was whisked away and a comedian took his place with antics of most ancient glory, the horseplay that the new critics have always denounced, and the classics have always adored: the knock-about assaults on dignity, the physical satires on pomposity that delighted Æschylus no less than Aristophanes, Cervantes, Shakespeare, Goethe, all the big men who were not afraid of fun, and understood that there is less wisdom in a strut than in a caper.

Before all these windows Remember looked into countless phases of life and emotion and character. It occurred to her that she was getting a divine purview of the world. Life to her looked much what life must look like to God. He must see billions of souls unrolling their continuities before Him in all varieties of grimace, frenzy, collapse, appeal for pity or laugh-

ter. Humanity must dance before Him as before her until each life was cut off or vanished in its final fade-out.

The artistic beauties of the pictures made her inarticulately happy. She knew nothing of painting or sculpture or architecture. She loved sunsets and moon-dawns and light on leaves and the textures of fabrics embracing shadows in their folds. She loved the war of gloom and glow. She found the pictures overwhelmingly beautiful to her eyes, kaleidoscopes of leaping masses and lines, symphonic tempests of shape and color. For a time she was in a heaven of tumultuous ecstasies. But gradually the delight turned to torture, the torture of envy. She was young, and she had been told that she was beautiful. She had realized, at first with shame and anger and disgust, that she seized the eye and charmed it. Now, as in almost (Continued on page 116)

The Christmas Handicap

By
Gerald
Beaumont

Illustrated by William Meade Prince

MAJOR ROBERT ARLINGTON, of Fairfax County, raced his horses "fo' the hono' of the stable and the glo'y of Vi'ginia, suh!" They were distance horses, mostly of the Gloriana strain, and they liked to come bobbing into the stretch in about third place, one position out from the rail, and five or six lengths behind the leaders.

It was Major Bob's supreme pleasure to stand very erect in the clubhouse gallery, glasses on the advancing field, and watch his colors come from behind—to see his horses eat up the intervening gap and then fight it out for the wire in a nose-and-nose finish such as the judges hate.

As far back as anyone could remember, there had always been an Arlington entry in the Christmas Handicap at New Orleans; and every unattached jockey, every dusky rubber, every knight of the rag, considered it his bounden duty to support that entry. As soon as the first horse shoved its nose around the turn, the paddock contingent jammed against the railing and gave tongue.

"Come on, you Major Bob!" "Oh, you Santa Claus!" "Oh, you Christmas dinner!" "Come on, you Virginia!" "Come on—come on—come on!"

A heart-smothering finish, with little Sutherland outriding the pack, and then Major Bob would saunter from the winner's circle back to the clubhouse oasis, where he could rest a highly polished boot on a brass railing, acknowledge congratulations, and listen to the inevitable: "Major, wont you join us?"

Such invitation always prompted the Major to press his broad-brimmed black hat a little more firmly over white hair, transfer his cane from right hand to the crook of the left arm, and reply:

"Don't ca' if I do, suh!"

In the evening there was a Christmas dinner at the old Cosmopolitan, just opposite the Sazerac, or at La Louisienne, where M'sieur Jules presided, and every one of the hundred-odd

jockeys, stableboys and swipes found a five-dollar bill under his plate.

The dinner was served in Southern style with Virginia ham coated with molasses and pepper and baked in wine, suckling pig, turkey and candied yams. Lastly there was always an enormous lighted plum-pudding with a sprig of holly, and then Major Bob arose for the toast.

"Y'all happy down the?"

The affirmation came in a yell, knives and forks banging.

"Y'all a-goin' to be heah next yeah?"

Again the chorus and the clatter.

Then the toast, Major Bob's voice ringing clear and vibrant:

"Mo' sensitive than a woman, mo' cou'ageous than a man—the *tho'oughbred*, suh—*God and Vi'ginia!*"

Oh, he was a type! A motion-picture director would have wept with joy at beholding him. Very tall and very erect, a white carnation at his buttonhole, a pre-war mustache and a dab of white on the chin. After the manner of all Arlingtons, he honored a woman, worshiped a horse, doted on Virginia twist and mint julep—the latter unspoiled by a straw.

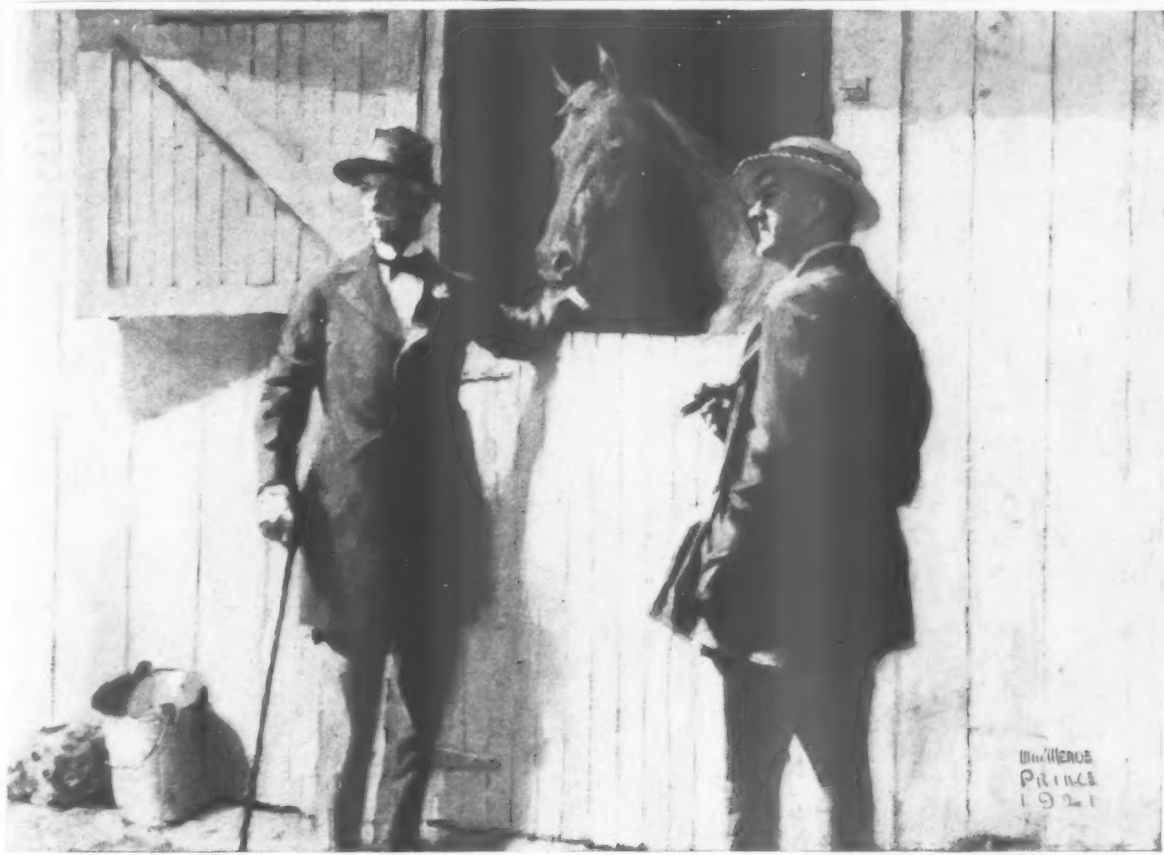
Time, the relentless shearer, deprived Major Bob of many things. The heyday of glory and romance passed from the race-tracks of the country, leaving but an afterglow; New Orleans laid sacrilegious sewers in the Vieux Carré; the Eighteenth Amendment made an ice-cream parlor out of Henri's Petit Place on Iberville Street; one after another of his intimate associates passed on—and there remained only the Christmas Handicap and Christmas "paddock dinner," by which to perpetuate tradition.

The Major grew a little thinner and a little straighter, and finally he sold his last stake-horse, Rapidan, in order that he might still play the princely host on Christmas Day.

He was then reduced to a single colt, a magnificent youngster,



The Information Kid could contain



himself no longer. "Major," he protested, "that mule couldn't run a mile downhill!"

the first son of Rappahannock, out of the great mare Heart o' Virginia. The Major named him Charlestown and turned down an offer of twenty thousand dollars, before the youngster had even faced the barrier.

"A tho'oughbred after my own heart, suh," he said, "—a colt that is of the family; as well ask me to sell my own son, suh!"

Charlestown came of age on the first day of the year while the Major was at Tia Juana. Hustlers, watching the early morning workouts, tabbed the colt as "the sweetest baby that ever looked through a bridle."

The Information Kid, who worked for "And You" McIvor, and who knew everything, even to a recipe for brandy that would make a jackrabbit spit in the face of a greyhound, reported his conclusions to his employer:

"The Major's little go-getter is primed and cocked for the question. He'll look the judges in the mug on the first start."

The morning before Charlestown was to make his debut in the Juvenile Stakes, Major Bob visited the track to watch the workout. And during the night an inquisitive gopher burrowed under the rail of the back-stretch so that when Charlestown came breezing along with a little colored boy on his back, the colt's left forefoot encountered a pile of soft dirt with a hole underneath.

THE Major climbed the fence and cut across the center field. Rail-birds and clockers fluttered in the same direction. They converged upon a bay colt floundering on three legs, and a terrified little negro digging heels into the turf and clinging desperately to the reins.

"Oh, mah Gawd!" chattered the child of the stable. "He's done bus' his laig plumb off. . . . Whoa, there! . . . Yessir, Mista' Major. . . . Oh, mah God, de bones is stickin' right out!"

Major Bob took firm hold of the bridle, gave one quick glance at the jagged cannon-bone protruding from the torn flesh, another

glance at the colt's eyes, large with exquisite agony, and then wheeled grimly on the bystanders.

A man in a gray uniform pushed forward in answer to the look. His arm went to a back pocket and produced an automatic. "No hand but mine," interposed the Major. "I'll take it, suh!"

He coaxed the colt gently off the track and into an alleyway between the stables, caressed the animal a moment, and then raised the weapon. . . .

When it was all over, the Major dusted off his coat mechanically, pocketed the automatic, straightened his shoulders and sauntered off behind one of the barns.

Fortunately, the Information Kid saw the whole thing, and he knew Major Bob. Down the track, the Kid made out And You McIvor, the most urbane and polished bookmaker who ever graced a betting ring. McIvor and the Major were friends of long standing. The Kid raced toward the bookmaker.

"Quick," he panted. "Charlestown broke his leg, and the Major is back of the barn with a gun! Quick!"

The bookmaker sprinted in the indicated direction. He gained the corner of the barn, checked himself, and then strolled leisurely to meet the owner of Charlestown.

"Ah, Major," he greeted. "Good morning. I just heard about your loss; I am very sorry."

The Major had taken his stand under a tall cottonwood. One hand was fumbling at his coat tails. At the sound of McIvor's voice, he turned calm eyes on the bookmaker.

"A ve'y deplo'able accident, suh—deplo'able!"

McIvor nodded. He was a splendid figure of a man, very handsome, and addicted to silk shirts, Brazilian diamonds, and a demeanor that nothing could ruffle.

Once at Saratoga, Petroleum Billy Smith, fresh from the oil-fields, had rushed up to McIvor and offered one hundred thousand dollars on a two-and-a-half-to-one shot.

"A quarter of a million to one hundred thousand," drawled McIvor. "And is that all? Your ticket, sir, and thank you. —And you?"

That broke the plunger's nerve, and added another picturesque phrase to the vocabulary of the race-track.

And You's suave voice broke the silence:

"Major, I have a claim against the Toomey stable for the pick of the string, and I value your judgment very highly. If you would consider a purely business proposition from an old friend, I should like to surrender that claim to you."

The Major's face reddened.

"Suh!"

"A purely business proposition," pursued McIvor smoothly. "I cannot run the horse myself, Major, and you can pay for him out of the winnings. It would be a terrible blow to the sport to have the Virginia colors missing from, say, the Christmas Handicap, Major!"

The muscles on the Major's cheeks began to twitch; he located a huge handanna handkerchief, and blew his nose very violently.

"Y'all are ve'y kind," he acknowledged. "I am powe'fully in you' debt, suh!"

McIvor linked an arm in that of the Virginian.

"This is Mexico," he reminded. "Over at San Ysidro there is a bartender from the St. Charles whose specialty is a silver fizz."

"Suh," exclaimed the Major, "you ove'pow' me!"

The Information Kid grinned as he saw them vanish through

The Information Kid temporarily subsided.

Up and down the tanbark lanes marched the Major, pausing every now and then to study with the eyes of a connoisseur some satin-coated son or daughter of the turf. When he found a colt or filly whose lines pleased him, he coaxed the animal to the open half-door of the stall, ran a hand winningly across the forehead, and then looked intently at the eyes.

Once it seemed as though he was about to make his selection in King William, a four-year-old chestnut, by Prince of Orange out of Cardinella, and winner of the Baja California Stakes. The Major had seen the bay stallion finish in front many times; also he had seen him beaten once by Sunproof, the Kentucky crack. He studied the horse a long time, ejected thin streams of dark juice at meditative intervals, and finally shook his head.

"Reckon y'all are a-going to find me ha'd to please," he sighed.

And then in the last stall he came across a big gray gelding peering out at him.

The Major stopped in his tracks and his eyes lighted. "Ah," he said, "old Chickahominy! I was pow'fully nea' to fo'gettin' y'all had shipped him down heah. Oblige me, suh."

The Information Kid could contain himself no longer.

"Major," he protested, "that mule couldn't run a mile downhill. He's one day older than Adam!"

The Major exploded. He was very sensitive on the subject of age.

"Dammit, suh," he protested, "a tho'oughbred is no olde' than his legs, suh!"

"That's it," wailed the Kid: "he aint got no legs; he saw his first firing-iron during the Civil War!"

"Shut up," snarled Ted Fuller, who knew by the Major's face there was a chance of unloading the option advantageously.

"A game campaigner, Major—nine years old, but still good for the sprints. His knees are scratched up a bit, but he's perfectly sound and will pay his way. Half brother, you know, to Shenandoah, and the latter shows the Gloriana strain. Stout-hearted—not a showy horse, but a good, reliable—"

"Sausage," cut in the Kid, "and sour at that! Major, let me wise you: Chickahominy has been running on the merry-go tracks in Canada for three years; before that, he was in the Sullivan stables; and before that Milt York, Barney Dugan and Billy Callender had him—"

"And befo' that, suh," said the Major with quiet dignity, "I had the hono'—the ve'y great hono'—of owning the ho'se myse'f!"

"Oh, well," said the Kid, and gave it up.

Chickahominy's ears were short and set well to the front, his face slightly concave, dipping between the eyes and nostrils; a lean jaw suggested Arab blood. The Major grasped the lower lip and found it firm; he passed a hand over the eyes where age leaves its telltale hollows, and deftly gauged the depressions. Then he stepped back, as a man does who is viewing a work of art, and permitted his eyes to take in slowly the iron-gray line that undulated from the head, dipped slightly in front of the withers, curved, and rising a little along the back, swelled boldly over loins and quarters, dipping again into the flowing lines of the tail.

Next he turned his attention to Chickahominy's legs, running his hand over the scarred knees and the tendons seared by the firing-iron. One after another he picked up the hoofs, studied them, and released his hold. There is an old saying among horsemen: "The finer the hair, the firmer the hoof." Chickahominy's legs were silken.

Finally, Major Bob straightened up and laid a firm hand on the halter.

"Would y'all oblige me by kickin' that bucket theah?" he drawled.

Fuller looked puzzled, but a moment later a galvanized bucket banged against a post and clattered off to one side.

Chickahominy pulled back, one ear reversed, the other forward, eyes rolled back in the direction of the strange noise. The Major caught the flame of the ruby in the eyeballs. It was what he had been looking for.

"The eye of the tho'oughbred, suh, is the window of the soul; reckon I'll jes' lead the winner of the nex' Christmas Handicap to my stable, suh!"

A sound as of escaping steam came from the Information Kid. "Dammit, suh," exclaimed the Major, "are you trying to make me lose my tempah?"

"Don't mind him, Major," soothed Ted Fuller. "You've got a good horse—only I warn you that I may go after the Handicap myself; it will be a twenty-thousand-dollar event next year."



"Throwing the Major down, eh?" he questioned. "You won't get very far with that kind of stuff!"

the gate. The next day he made it a point to be on hand when the Major called at the Toomey stables and, accompanied by Trainer Ted Fuller, walked along the row of whitewashed stalls. The Kid trailed along at their heels, bent upon keeping the Major from making any mistakes, for the Toomey horses were known principally for their ability to read the betting odds on the way to the post.

Fuller tried to shoo the Kid away, but the latter insisted he was there as a representative of McIvor. He had something pertinent to say about every horse that was brought out.

"Thick-winded and been tubed, Major. That one gets his mail at the sixth hole. . . . Now, here's what I call a shifty baby—remember Briar Rose and Secret Silver? Same stable. Take my tip, Major, and the first rattle out of the box, you can hold your hat up to the gent with the greenbacks. *Mucho dinero aqui!*"

Finally the Major turned on him.

"Two things I reckon y'all better let me pick, suh—my wife and my ho'se."



Major Bob's voice came in an imploring whisper: "Chickahominy, suh! . . . V'i'ginia!"

He could not resist his little joke. "No offense, Major, but now that you've made your selection, I'm afraid we'll have to let King William show old Chickahominy the way to the wire next Christmas."

"In that case, suh," replied the old gentleman, "it will be our privilege—our very great privilege, suh—to see a ho'se-race!"

The Information Kid watched Major Bob lead Chickahominy away. Then he hurried with his tale of woe to And You McIvor.

"Hoot-owls in the Major's watchtower!" he wailed. "Any time Chickahominy finds his way to the pay-station again, they'll have to put Columbus in the pilot-house!"

McIvor frowned. "Too bad!" he said. "I thought of course he'd take King William. Well, funny things happen on a race-track; let him alone, Kid; don't worry him."

"Huh!" grunted the Kid. "I should care if you don't—only there'll be a lot of guys missing the old feed-bag next Christmas, and I'll be one of them. Chickahominy—this way out!"

He clutched his nose with one hand, a coat lapel with the other, and led himself mournfully away.

MAJOR BOB remained as debonair and courtly as ever. Afternoons found him in his customary seat at the track, close to the stairs. In the evenings he sat in the lobby of the Grant Hotel at San Diego, one knee crossed over the other.

His friends tactfully forebore to mention the big gray gelding that was now the sole defender of colors once the proud boast of Virginia. They believed that it was the only horse Major Bob could afford to secure. Had they known that he had been given the pick of the Toomey stables, they would have been quick to tell him that Chickahominy was a sullen, worn-out stall-warmer who hadn't won a handicap event in years. They would have begged him to seek redress from Ted Fuller. With pity in their hearts they waited for the final tragedy.

But get-away day came, marking the close of the meeting, and the children of the whip and spurs departed for other pastures without Chickahominy's having been once called to the barrier in his new colors.

On the third day after the bugle had sounded taps, the same little colored boy who had clung to the reins of the injured Charlestown led Chickahominy, in traveling wraps, toward a single box-car waiting on the track siding.

The Major was there to superintend the departure.

"Bubbles, you rascal, y'all a-going to be comfo'table?"

"Yassir, Mister Major; me an' ol' Chick is goin' travel jes' like a ol' Pullman; sure got a lot o' feed, an' beddin'."

Chickahominy entered the car apathetically and made himself at home in the bedded stall over the front of which a sheet was draped to keep off the wind. Box-cars were nothing new to him. They meant merely a day or two of jostling and swaying, and then a return to the routine of whip and spurs. Other horses might be turned out for a well-earned rest, but old Chickahominy had of late been owned by men who made him earn his board by taking second and third money in the selling races. There was a time when traveling clothes in the early spring would have meant Kentucky and the opening at Lexington, but that was when the huge gray was in his prime. Now the Montana circuit was the probable destination. Chickahominy munched sullenly at his feed.

But when, three days later, the box-car came to a permanent rest, and Bubbles, opening the door at a platform, cried to him, "Here we is, ol' meal-ticket—come on out yeah and wahn yo'se'f," Chickahominy stepped out into a region that was neither Montana, Kentucky nor Louisiana.

"Dat's right, hawss, look round," encouraged Bubbles. "Major done say you been heah befo'. See does yo' remembah?"

Chickahominy stared with cocked ears at a circle of blue-green

hills, splashed with poppies; his nostrils drank in pure ozone, tepid and vitalizing; his shoulder-muscles twitched under the caress of a California sun. He wrinkled an upper lip, and committed himself to a tentative nicker.

Bubbles looked up at the station sign and spelled out: "Pleasanton—to San Francisco 41 miles."

"Sure got yeah all right," he grunted. "Wondah where am de Major?"

A figure in a broad felt hat and a black frock coat turned the corner of the road and sauntered forward.

"Bubbles, you rascal! Chickahominy, suh!"

The little negro wriggled with joy like a puppy. "Yassir, Mister Major, sure am glad to see you! When does we eat?"

"Eat, you scamp! Do y'all think that's what I brought you and that wuthless ho'se heah fo? Eat! Why, bless my soul!"

Nevertheless he piloted both horse and boy out to the old Pleasanton track, consigned the grinning Bubbles to the boss of the exercise crew, and then turned old Chickahominy loose in a blue-grass pasture that overlooked the circular course.

"Y'all are on fu'lough, suh," he announced. "Six yea's ago, suh, y'all went from this heah spot to Eme'yville, and yo' upheld my hono' in the Christmas Handicap. Don't tell me you don't remembah, suh! An A'linton ho'se nevah fo'gets!"

Chickahominy wandered away, seeking apparently to put as much distance between himself and his owner as the fences would permit.

himself to the morning newspapers, and one or two racing journals which came to him by mail. Later in the day force of habit impelled him toward the track to watch the work-outs, mostly of harness horses, "cold-blooded" animals with whom he had small sympathy. In the warm evenings he enjoyed sitting in an easy chair on the porch and listening to the chatter of the pretty girls who sauntered by. Sometimes he elected to stroll over to old Doc Kelly's cottage. The veterinarian was heavy of flesh and sparse of scalp, but he had some very excellent remedies in his cellar, and he was quite skilled in chess. Also he did not mind listening to Major Bob's description of how Warren's Corps crossed the Potomac; so the two had become quite good friends.

But there was one part of the Major's daily program that was never affected by weather or circumstances. When the sun dipped low, and lavender shadows crept down the western hills of the Livermore Valley, Chickahominy's owner plodded up to the pasture to pay his respects to the big gelding. It was quite a while before the horse was dissuaded from the suspicion that such visits meant the end of the only vacation he had ever known. He was always alert for the sight of a halter. But at length he came to understand, by the apple or the lump of sugar left on the top rail, that his visitor was to be trusted, and in time he ate confidently out of his owner's hand, and waited for him expectantly.

Relations having been established on this basis, the Major sat on the fence in the late afternoons talking to Chickahominy.

Now, there is this about a horse: he does not reason, but he remembers; he does not comprehend words, but he responds to tones; he does not recognize features, but he absorbs the spirit of his trainer.

Early summer, and the bees were buzzing in the clover. Major Bob came up to the pasture one afternoon and found Chickahominy rolling around on his back, legs waving ridiculously in the air. At his call, the gray struggled up, stared at him roguishly, and then snorted off in the opposite direction.

"Heah, suh," commanded the Major, "stop it this minute, suh! Y'all are a tho'oughbred, not a confounded ci'cus-ho'se!" But the aged gelding merely kicked up his heels, frolicked away and then approached in a flirtatious circle. It was very evident that Chickahominy desired his owner to chase him.

The Major affected high indignation, but he was none the less delighted, for there was no mistaking the fact that the son of the great Chickamauga was beginning to feel his oats.

Then came the annual county fair, and for three days the old race-track boiled noisily; crowds drifted in and out of the livestock tents, and in the afternoons a bugle called hot-blooded horses to the post. A battle-scarred gelding on the hillside stared at the scene below, wandered away, and returned to the bars for another look. When the Major left that night, Chickahominy

followed along the fence and neighed shrilly. His owner looked back.

"Patience, suh!" he commanded.

The fair ended; Pleasanton drowsed again; and then one morning old Doc Kelly and little Bubbles trailed the Major up the hill.

The climb told on the veterinarian. "Glory go to Peter!" he puffed. "I

thought you told me you had a stake-horse, Major; he's a goat!"

"Suh!"

"Angora, at that! Look at his hair; damn' old broken-down billy goat."

"Not a wo'd mo', suh!" flamed the Major. "Not one wo'd! I allow no man to talk about my ho'se, suh, in that —"

"Don't argue," cut in Kelly, "—it's too hot. I say he's a goat!" The Major waved his cane. "Damnation, suh!"

"Same to you," chuckled the other, "and many of them." He was beginning to breathe a little more freely. "Well, catch your old whisbroom, and I'll see what I can do with it; go ahead—what do you think I came up here for?"

The Major quivered irresolutely, but Bubbles slipped a halter on the restless Chickahominy, and finally they trekked dustily downward. A day later the Arlington gelding, close-clipped, hoof-polished, shod and smelling vilyly (Continued on page 127)



"Mo' sensitive than a woman, mo' cou'ageous than a man: the tho'oughbred, suh—God and Virginia!"

The Major walked back to town along the shaded country road, and engaged very modest quarters at the old hotel with its broad veranda fronting the main street—a street that is somehow more suggestive of the Old Dominion than of the new El Dorado.

In the long days that followed, Major Bob kept pretty much to himself. In the early mornings he took his constitutional walk as far as the station and back again and then devoted

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The Parrot

By

Lee Foster Hartman

Illustrated by
J. Allen St. John

"I CAN'T imagine why Wung Lo is taking so long to bring the salad."

Mrs. Stanleigh glanced helplessly across the table at her husband. They had married and come out to the tropics only six months ago; and on this occasion—their first formal entertainment of guests—the young wife was extremely solicitous that everything should go smoothly in spite of the limited facilities for social entertainment at an upcountry rubber station.

Sitting at her right and left were Colonel Sir John Thorpe and his sister Miss Thorpe—"important people," in her husband's terse words. Sir John had sojourned in the Far East until, as he declared, he knew it like a book. Even the skin of his heavy-jowled, jovial face had taken on an olive tone akin to that of the Orientals among whom he had lived so long. As one of the directors of the Imperial East Indies Rubber Company, Ltd., of London, his seemingly casual and quite unannounced visit at the Malduno upcountry plantation might not be without significance for young Stanleigh, who had it in charge, and who, being from the American Middle West, was bent on showing results.

In consequence his bride of six months was considerably distraught and not a little awed by the big British baronet and the thin, aristocratic-looking Miss Thorpe. And now there had come in the orderly progress of the luncheon an inexplicable delay, which, as hostess, she could no longer pretend to ignore. Something had obviously gone amiss with the salad or with Wung Lo.

"He's a veritable jewel, and so dependable!" She nervously sought excuse for the little Chinese servant, who was almost the sole reliance of the Stanleigh household, serving capably in every capacity from majordomo to cook and general factotum. "I don't know how we should have managed without him, all these months, with no previous experience of the tropics ourselves. But what can have happened now—"

"Don't worry, my dear. The salad will be along." Her husband spoke up with easy assurance. "You must remember the poor chap has had no end of things to attend to since he got back this morning."

That was undeniably true, as Mrs. Stanleigh was forced to reflect, and might very likely account for the delay in the cook-house, which was without precedent.

Once a week Mr. Stanleigh intrusted Wung Lo with company business and all the household errands to the coast station—a complex mission which the little fellow performed with unfailing promptitude and accuracy. The journey always required a day and a night, and in the interval Mrs. Stanleigh had to make sorry shift with the two clumsy Malay house-boys, whose language she could not speak. And never before had she so sorely missed the silent, deft efficiency of Wung Lo as on the preceding afternoon, when the Thorpes had unexpectedly arrived.





"You've been deuced fortunate to pick him up out here in Maldano," observed Colonel Thorpe as one speaking with authority. "For some reason the Chinese seem to shun this particular quarter of the South Seas."

"I believe Wung Lo and his wife are the only Chinese on the island," Stanleigh agreed.

Colonel Thorpe looked up in thoughtful surprise. "Then he has a wife of his own race here?"

"You might live here for weeks and never suspect her existence," Mrs. Stanleigh broke in. "She's almost a mystery, for Wung Lo keeps her practically immured in a hut which he built for her, adjoining the servants' quarters, and surrounded with high bamboo palings. I sometimes wonder if it's because Wung Lo treasures her so tremendously that he keeps

her hidden from all the world. She never emerges, so far as I know. Only rarely have I had a glimpse of the creature squatting in her doorway."

"Then it must have been she that I caught sight of yesterday," said Miss Thorpe with a show of languid interest. "Gorgeously dressed, and yet sitting there in the dust!"

Mrs. Stanleigh's face went blank with surprise. "But I never saw her dressed up! And yesterday—when Wung Lo was away! How strange!"

"My dear Mrs. Stanleigh, these queer Eastern people are absolutely unfathomable," the aristocratic Miss Thorpe went on coldly, speaking from long experience of the Far East—which was not to her liking though patiently endured. "Nothing they do or could do would ever surprise me."

"I never dreamed that Wung Lo's wife had any fine clothes. How I wish I had seen her!" exclaimed Mrs. Stanleigh. . . .

However, other eyes than those of the indifferent Miss Thorpe had, on the preceding afternoon, rested upon the wife of Wung Lo. Shortly after the arrival of the guests, she had appeared at the door of the hut, garbed as if for some high festival, her face and eyebrows painted, her heavily coiled black hair adorned with strange ornaments that glittered in the sun. She had come out arrayed in full Oriental splendor, only to drop down cross-legged in the dust and to sit there in a profound and stolid immobility.

Ting Fu, Colonel Thorpe's valet, had promptly caught sight of her from a window of the bungalow, and had stopped in his unpacking of his master's luggage to stare at this apparition of a woman of his own race. He paused more than once to appraise her covertly while he pretended to be industriously concerned with Colonel Thorpe's suits of white drill.

He was an over-plump, sleek young Chinaman with very black, sly, beadlike eyes in his yellow face. His smile was crafty and unpleasant, bespeaking guile and understanding picked up in the course of long contact with Western civilization in the great, evil city of Canton. Smiling to himself, he had indulged in discreet glances at the wife of Wung Lo. To his Oriental taste, she was exceedingly fair to look upon, and desirable, her charm enhanced by the shimmer of silks and the flash of gold. Her eyes never lifted from the ground—or if they lifted, the least fraction of an inch, the movement was imperceptible. But one somehow suspected that she was perfectly aware of everything that was taking place, that she may even have divined what was going on in the thick, throbbing heart of Ting Fu, and was content to have it so.

That night, after assisting his master to retire, Ting Fu had taken himself off to the servants' quarters in the rear, adjoining the hut of Wung Lo. He had carried with him his master's parrot in order that the bird's shrill chatter might not disturb the slumbers of the household. . . .

"I can't imagine what has happened to the salad," Mrs. Stanleigh said again, as the minutes lengthened. The luncheon had proceeded admirably up to that point. But now even the cigarette, which Colonel Thorpe had casually lighted during the interim, had grown short. Outside, a profound stillness filled the air, for the trade-wind had died out, and the fronds of the palm trees that flanked the windward side of the bungalow drooped in utter languor in the sunshine.

Suddenly the vast midday silence of the tropics was broken by shrill, raucous sounds—unmistakably a parrot's voice, issuing from somewhere in the rear of the bungalow.

Mrs. Stanleigh's face abruptly brightened. "Is he really swearing in Chinese?" she asked.

Colonel Thorpe smiled at the question and cocked an attentive ear to catch the bird's unintelligible jargon.

"You mustn't believe all the nonsense he tells you about that parrot," Miss Thorpe rejoined severely. "I have begged Sir John a thousand times to get rid of that dreadful bird. It's too ridiculous to be packing it along everywhere we go, as if traveling weren't enough of an ordeal in this part of the world. It's a positive nuisance sometimes at hotels."

"I give you my word, Mrs. Stanleigh," asserted Colonel Thorpe, amused by his sister's outburst, "it does swear in Chinese. Rather a point in the bird's favor, to my thinking. When impelled to profanity, it has the decency to do so in an unintelligible tongue. Rather a pity, Stanleigh, that you don't understand the language. You'd be vastly amused at the little beggar's proficiency." Colonel Thorpe was not above winking a little grossly at his host.

"I think it is perfectly disgusting," said Miss Thorpe severely.

"Well, my dear, console yourself. I can assure you that he's not swearing just now." Colonel Thorpe was listening intently to catch the parrot's words. "H'm! Quite the contrary! Sounds very much as if he were making love. I declare, it's queer, the stuff the little blighter manages to pick up—goodness knows where."

The parrot's voice had indeed lost its shrill insistence. It was mumbling detached phrases, almost cooing, as it were, in an uncouth way that was more grotesque than its harsh, unbridled pipings. Then it became silent altogether. A profound stillness once more descended upon the

cook-house in the rear, from which issued only the thin, luminous smoke of Wung Lo's charcoal fire. . . .

Wung Lo had returned from the coast station that morning about eleven o'clock, laden as usual with household supplies. For an instant his placid face had ruffled with surprise on discovering that guests had arrived during his absence. It had been most unfortunate that he should have been away at such an important time, with his poor mistress thrown upon her own resources and quite helpless with the Malay house-boys. The household machinery always came to a dead stop in the intervals of his absence. Well, here were instant and innumerable duties devolving upon him.

Wung Lo flew about his tasks. He had first put on Mr. Stanleigh's desk the letters and other documents that he had brought from the coast station. Then the household supplies must be unpacked, checked and disposed of—work that could not be intrusted to the clumsy house-boys. He had to make a verbal report of various matters to his master, and meanwhile his mistress was waiting to give him special orders as to the luncheon. The house must be straightened up, and the guest-chambers attended to. He had no time to think of himself or of the wife of his bosom, immured in the hut, awaiting his return.

He fell briskly, dexterously to work. And then, happening to glance out of a window, he suddenly caught sight of Ting Fu, lolling under a tree, where he amused himself rolling and smoking cigarettes while he lay on his back and contemplated the blue sky in a state of beatific lethargy.

Wung Lo's soft, meek eyes blinked twice in quick succession. He thoughtfully contemplated the sleek, contented Ting Fu, whose existence he had not up to that moment suspected. Then his eyes turned slowly to observe the hut surrounded by the high bamboo palings. It was, as usual, devoid of sound or sign of life. The empty doorway gaped blackly at him in the brilliant tropic sunshine. The wife of his bosom, as became her, was discreetly holding herself aloof from curious eyes.

Wung Lo turned to survey again the prostrate form of Ting Fu under the tree. He was deep in thought. The Malay boys had not told him of this valet of the visiting gentleman, who must have shared their quarters overnight. From one of the shacks in the rear came the shrill screeches of a parrot. So! The lazy fellow had a parrot that could swear in bad Cantonese!

Just then Wung Lo heard his mistress' voice calling to him. He trotted off instantly in response.

"Me comee, Miss Stanlee! Me comee!"

Whatever his own thoughts, they must wait.

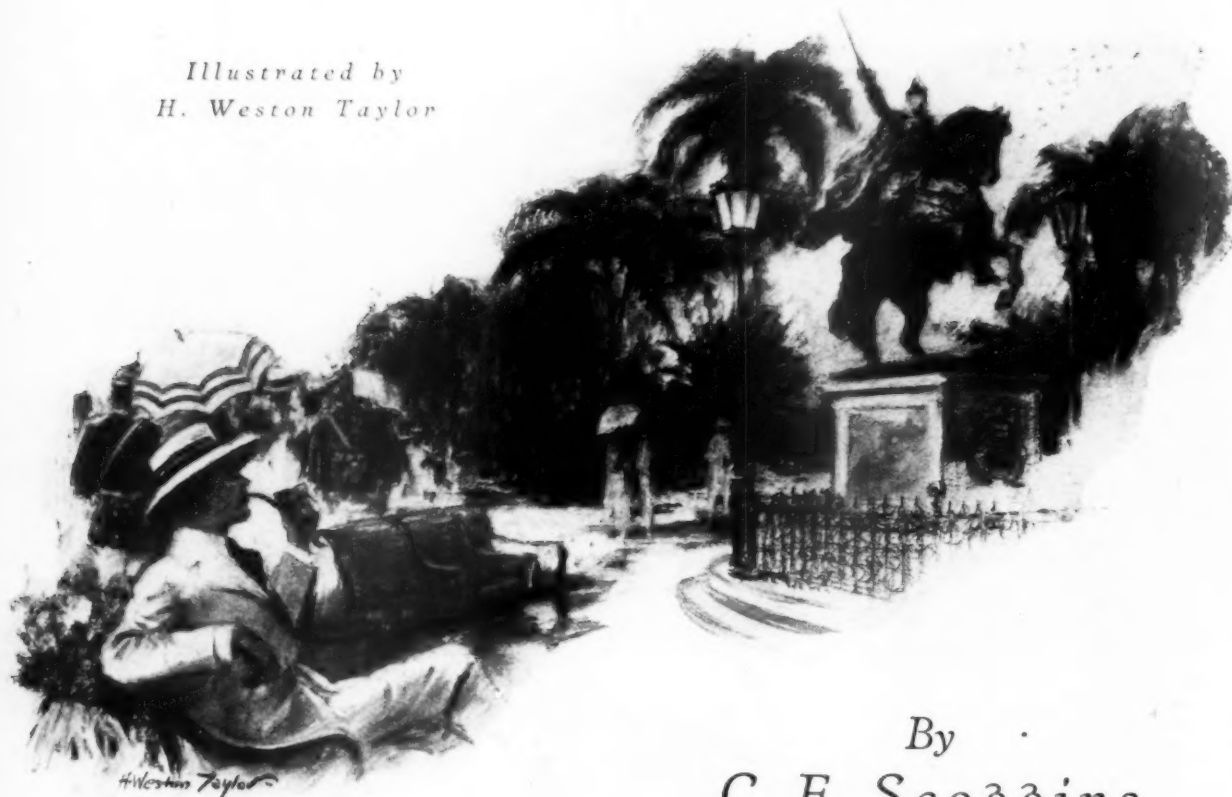
For an hour or more, household duties, multiplied by the presence of unexpected guests, challenged his unremitting efforts. The honor of the house devolved upon him. He ordered the Malay boys sharply about. Impatient of their laggard movements, he made repeated, hurried trips from the bungalow to the cook-house in the rear. He bustled back and forth with quick, short steps, fetching and carrying, and creating within the bungalow a pristine orderliness, with a festive touch here and there in (Continued on page 122)



Suddenly Wung Lo paused. The parrot had ceased its blasphemy. . . . It was crooning love-words, endearments.

The Ingenious Señor 'Oogis

Illustrated by
H. Weston Taylor



By
C. E. Scoggins

"A GREAT calling—commerce," sighed the swarthy gentleman. "Ah, you Americans! Your energy makes you masters of the earth." William tried modestly to ignore this encomium, with some difficulty, because that was the way he felt about it himself. Every time he looked at his card, that word *Representante* leaped out to thrill him. It was not set off by black-face type, nor even distinguished by italics; but it was Spanish, don't you see?—signifying that Bill Hughes, erstwhile prosaic seller of typewriters in the unremarkable region of Georgia, U. S. A., was actually and finally embarked on the romance of export trade. Yes, the conquest of the far-lying provinces of the earth.

The better to dissemble his pride, he hissed for a waiter. William was already an accomplished hisser; he had been in the country twenty-six hours. He had even learned that the push-button in his vast room at the Nuevo Mundo was only an ornament, that the way to summon a bellboy was to open the door and clap his hands.

"The same, if you will be so kind," accepted the swarthy gentleman. His name, if William had deciphered correctly the engraved flourishes on his card, was José Pablo Castiello. Somewhat to William's regret, Mr. Castiello spoke English, spoke it with florid grace and accuracy. There was no excuse for the practice of Spanish with this polished and agreeable stranger.

"I have the deepest admiration for the institutions of your country," said Mr. Castiello warmly.

"You've lived in the States, haven't you?"

"Oh, yes. I am in fact a graduate of your own Harvard law school." One gathered that it was a great and undeserved honor to be a graduate of Harvard. William, himself a product of a Western university that held in scorn the proud colleges of the decadent East, conceived a mild proprietary pride in Harvard.

"You are a lawyer?"

"A lawyer." It was plainly a great grief to be a lawyer. "But commerce holds a fascination for me. To go up and down the earth, selling things—pencils, matches, anything! The trader is the missionary of civilization, the point of contact between the peoples of the earth."

There! Mr. Castiello had put neatly into words the very thought that was vaguely in William's mind. Truly it was a happy chance that had seated him at this table. A fellow-mind, one who, but for unfortunate early training, might himself have been a salesman. William expanded; but perhaps that was partly due to the third consecutive drink. William was not yet hardened to the indoor sport of the tropics.

"You have sold many typewriters here?" queried Mr. Castiello.

William sighed. "Oh, no. I got in only yesterday. I haven't seen anybody yet."

It was true. He, Bill Hughes, of whom old man Aiken boasted that he could sell greyhounds to a man who wanted to buy dachshunds, had been in San Salvador twenty-six hours and had not even seen the man he had come to see. William was ashamed.

"I should think," hazarded Mr. Castiello, "that you would find this a good market for typewriters, a comparatively virgin field. Have you investigated the—prospects, I think you call them?"

"I came here," said William, "at the request of the Government. They are in the market for some machines. After I have sold them, I shall be in a position to establish a desirable agency."

He said it casually; to an American, a master of the earth, it was nothing—like that!—to flit into the tropics to confer with governments. The inference was that next week he might be on his way to sell typewriters to the Eskimos.

Mr. Castiello was impressed. "Ah—you have arranged an audience with the President?"

"The purchasing agent," corrected William kindly. "What had the President to do with buying typewriters? 'He must be a busy man!' He grinned ruefully. 'Asked me to come here, and when I sent in my card, he sent back word to call the day after tomorrow!'"

Mr. Castiello smiled sympathetically. "It must be confessed that we Latins have no conception of the value of time," he said.

William gazed with satisfaction at the crowded Café Nacional: the fiercely mustachioed bartender, the little groups of dark-faced, white-linen-clad conspirators at the tables, now bending together in conference, now shaking dice with wild gesticulation and strange expletives—it might be for the payment of the drinks they sipped; it might be for the murder of the President. Through the swinging door, as some one entered or departed, he caught glimpses of the beggars on the steps of the terraced Plaza, and past the tall stems of palm trees the equestrian statue of General Somebody-or-Other, who had fought so nobly that he sacrificed all his men before he would admit defeat.

The export! Truly virtue was its own reward. He would have hissed for the waiter again had not Mr. Castiello forestalled him.

He was a little disconcerted—perhaps that was due to the fifth drink—when Mr. Castiello somewhat abruptly lost interest in the subject of commerce, murmured something about an engagement, shook hands punctiliously and withdrew. William, reared in the conviction that one does not drink alone, perforce followed. He seated himself in the Plaza before the statue of the heroic General, filled his pipe, and meditated pleasantly on the future of William S. Hughes, export representative of the Aiken Typewriter Co. of Aiken, New Jersey, United States of America.

He would sell fifty typewriters to the Government of this country. The prestige thus gained he would spread through the length of Central America, and afterward the great continent to the south! He was almost glad that old man Aiken had neglected the export so long; the more rosily would shine the name of Bill Hughes on the blank page of the future.

It was falling dusk. Yellow lights winked through the foliage. A sudden flight of little birds darkened the sky, wheeling, darting as if in

pursuit of invisible insects, so near that he could hear their faint frantic pipings, so many that the rustle of tiny wings was like a passing wind. Down a side-street began the mellow thudding music of a *marimba*, throbbing, throbbing through the dusk. It stirred the blood of William Hughes like a dim wild echo of some former existence, like the beating tom-toms of his prehistoric forbears, dream-remembered, in some vanished jungle. Pursuing this thread of exotic and pleasing fancy, he caught the tune that ran vaguely through that throbbing barbaric harmony, and grinned. It was "I'm Always Chasing Rainbows."

He saw Mr. Castiello again that evening, strolling in the Plaza at the concert-hour with a short, stout personage who wore a pompous frock coat and carried a gold-headed stick. Mr. Castiello, too, was in garb of ceremony; in answer to William's cheerful hail he gravely lifted a high silk hat of truly regal splendor.

H'm! Castiello was evidently a prominent citizen—highly impressive, that façade of his!

It was part of William Hughes' religion to be on time. At ten o'clock—sharp!—on the appointed day he toiled up the wide steps of the Government Building, lugging his Aiken in its shining enameled case.

"The Señor Arziñega," he explained in his careful Spanish to the high-collared aristocrat at the door, "expects me. Will you have the goodness to send him my card?"

The aristocrat inspected the card with a slight lift of the eyebrows, thereafter allowing his liquid brown eyes to pass over the form of Mr. Hughes—from head to foot and reverse—with a significance unmistakable in any language. In the idiom of Mr. Hughes, the stare meant: "The things you do see when you haven't got a gun!"

Aloud, this superior



"Sing, sister, sing!" they challenged.

person murmured, "Very well," and laid the card languidly on his desk.

Now, William was quite innocent of any suspicion that he had earned this high contempt; and he was not of the stuff to be daunted by an insolent clerk. His cheerful gray eyes hardened, caught the liquid brown ones and beat them down.

"Have the goodness to—to—my card at once!" The effectiveness of the rebuke was slightly marred by the fact that the verb "to send" had abruptly fled his vocabulary.

"Very well," said the clerk again, sullenly this time. He clapped his hands viciously, handed the card to a buttoned page and returned to his covert stare of contempt.

A GRACEFUL, fashionably groomed figure mounted the steps. He wore a jauntily crushed gray Fedora, gray trousers, a black cutaway; in one hand he carried gray suede gloves, in the other a slender stick. It was Mr. Castiello.

"Good morning, Mr. Hughes!" He saluted William casually and tossed a card on the desk. "To the Señor Arziñega," he instructed the clerk. He was pleasant, courteous—with the air of addressing a servant.

"With much pleasure, Señor Castiello!"

Yes, evidently a prominent citizen. And at that moment three things happened in stupefying succession and left Mr. Hughes, of the Aiken Typewriter Company, simmering gently in his own perspiration.

A porter entered, bearing on his head a glossy dark-green typewriter-case ornate with gilt stripes, and set it on the desk with the care of one handling an object of great price. Mr. Castiello deftly removed the cover, revealing a glossy dark-green typewriter, likewise resplendent with gilt stripes and further embellished with the golden legend, REPUBLICA DEL SALVADOR. The porter lifted this triumph of the enameler's art and bore it reverently within, Mr. Castiello strolling negligently after.

It had not needed that minor inscription under the golden legend to advise Mr. Hughes of the extent of his disaster. Even through green enamel and gilt paint, William could have recognized an Overton Model Twelve at a much greater distance than ten feet.

Castiello, mournful lawyer, intelligent and sympathetic confidant—his most formidable competitor! Arrayed as the lilies of the field, selling Overton typewriters! William felt so young that he was almost surprised to see that his trousers still reached his ankles; he wondered that his ears did not push off his hat. His gaze fell blankly on his modest black Aiken still sitting humbly on the floor.

He had not set it on the desk like an object of great price; he had dropped it thankfully, for William was hot, and the Aiken was heavy. It looked very neat and efficient by contrast with that gorgeous Overton, but a glimmer of intelligence was beginning to seep through the fog that shrouded William's brain: people who put elaborately carved façades on their houses, who favored gilded ceilings with stout cupids flapping about, who carried gold-headed canes, might conceivably attach importance to other things than efficiency.

But that important-looking special inscription—a simple trick, one that might impress a child!

The fog was clearing. William now achieved a profound bit of wisdom: every race retains some phase of childishness; why not this? Surely Mr. Castiello should know the foibles of his own race. Mr. Castiello, William began to perceive, knew a good many things—including the childishness of a certain young citizen of a great and admirable country, who could be led to boast of the typewriters he was going to sell.

Mr. Hughes, of the Aiken Typewriter Company, had the grace to indulge an inward grin at his own expense, even through his acute distress. What if that inscription meant that the sale was already made?

Through the door where Mr. Castiello's pageant had disappeared out strolled the buttoned page.

"The Señor Arziñega regrets that he is occupied. He will have much pleasure in receiving the Señor Hughes at four o'clock of the afternoon."

RAGE and despair choked William for a moment. Arziñega had not, then, arranged a competitive interview; the sleek Mr. Castiello had simply stolen his appointment. But rage and despair are not useful emotions, and not for nothing was William Mr. Hughes of the Aiken Typewriter Company. With outward nonchalance he borrowed a manner of firm, kindly condescension from Mr. Castiello's basket of tricks.

"Say to the Señor Arziñega," he instructed, "that I wish to ask him one question."

"I go to inquire."

William did not wait, but wearing some of Mr. Castiello's assurance, strolled craftily after. The youth was reporting at the inner shrine when he reached the door. Within sat Mr. Castiello, gazing fondly through the smoke of cigarettes at his gorgeous Overton. Behind the desk rose a short, stout, bald-headed gentleman, turning inquiring eyes on the door. The absence of the high hat saved William from too abrupt a shock of recognition.

It was Mr. Castiello's companion of the plaza.

"The Señor Hughes?"

He pronounced it phonetically, 'Oogis; but William recognized his name, and bowed. He had already learned that among Spanish-speaking people he must go through life as Mr. 'Oogis, or spend his life insisting on a pronunciation that seemed to them utterly illogical.

"I am very sorry, Señor 'Oogis. You will excuse—"

"Señor Arziñega," interrupted William, "you have not yet concluded the contract for the typewriters?"

He fancied that a faintly humorous glance passed between Mr. Castiello and Mr. Arziñega.

"No, señor."

"You will not decide before I have seen you this afternoon? You will be interested."

"Have no care, Señor 'Oogis. There is no hurry."

"Thank you," said William, and he shook hands and withdrew. His businesslike brevity, he thought, should impress Mr. Arziñega favorably. It may already have been observed that William was young.

He felt the eloquent eye of the clerk on him as he lifted the heavy typewriter-case, and an obscure circuit was completed in his brain. Bill had always been convinced of the dignity of labor; but he had the sixth sense of the salesman for feeling the other fellow's point of view. He lugged his burden down the steps, thoughtfully digesting, along with other things, the new idea that it was undignified for a man with a white collar to carry anything heavier than a fountain pen.

Verily, Horatio, there are more things in the export trade!

WHEN he returned in the afternoon, he was wearing his new pongee suit and a snowy Panama, not to speak of silk shirt and white buckskin shoes—sartorial exuberances originally intended for his hours of ease. He had almost ascended to the height of carrying the slender stick which he had boldly escorted about the Plaza under cover of night, but he could not overcome all at once his carefully acquired conceptions of what was businesslike in a salesman. He came precisely at four o'clock. Behind him trotted a porter carrying the Aiken on his head.

"Will you be seated, Señor 'Oogis?" At least he had achieved the conquest of the clerk. "The Señor Arziñega has not returned from lunch."

Mr. Hughes seated himself comfortably. In the unremarkable region of Georgia he had learned not to fret when the other fellow was late to an appointment.

At four-fifteen he began unconsciously to fidget. At four-thirty he was not only nervous but angry. At four-forty-two Mr. Arziñega alighted from his automobile and bustled in, profuse with apologies.

"Señor 'Oogis! So much pleasure! I was detained. Have you been waiting long?"

"It doesn't matter," lied Bill gallantly. He woke the porter drowsing in the doorway and prepared to follow to Mr. Arziñega's office.

"It is unfortunate," cried that distressed gentleman. "You will pardon me? I have another appointment now. Tomorrow at ten?" He shook hands again and bustled away, still dripping apology.

Baffled, helpless, William turned a stern eye on the clerk; at least he would tolerate no snickers from this understrapper. But that languid aristocrat saw nothing extraordinary. A gentleman had come to an appointment, dressed like a gentleman and properly attended by a servant; and because of the inconsiderate flight of time he had missed his appointment. What of it? There was another day tomorrow.

"Hasta mañana, Señor 'Oogis," he bowed. "Until tomorrow."

Tomorrow! William had heard that it was the most-used and least significant word in the Spanish language; the truth of this began to bite home painfully to his Anglo-Saxon temperament. Direct action! The desire for it boiled up in him so savagely that



The Battle of el Teatro Hidalgo centered speedily about the Berserk bulk of William Hughes, would-be vendor of typewriters.

he was almost tempted to kick the unoffending porter trotting along before. *Mañana!*

He would corner this elusive Arziñega if he had to use first dynamite and then chloroform.

WILLIAM stalked moodily into the Café Nacional. Within sat Mr. Castiello, blandly sipping a solitary vermouth. William summoned his histrionic ability, and grinned.

"Hello, Castiello," said he. "A fine lawyer you are!"

"But I am indeed a lawyer," protested the unruffled Mr. Castiello. "A good one too, if you insist. An inability to endure confinement forces me into the less sedentary work of trade."

"All right," laughed Bill. "I'll say you do the thing in style. What'll you have?"

"The same, if you will be so kind." Mr. Castiello drained the glass before him and set it carefully down—too carefully. Mr. Castiello's hand seemed perfectly steady, but the glass struck the table fully half an inch before he expected it to do so. William had always considered vermouth an innocuous drink; his respect for it in quantity rose perceptibly.

"Style?" said Mr. Castiello, smiling indulgently. "I am a gentleman; I dress the part. Why not? Myself, I admire the delightful informality of Americans; but you are doubtless aware that in Spanish to say that one is *informal* is deep opprobrium—it implies rudeness, unmannerliness, lack of consideration."

He waved a graceful hand, dismissing the subject. "You are amusing, my friend. You were so confident of getting the order."

"I'll bet you fifty dollars I get it," said Bill deliberately, watching his face. An indefinite something in Mr. Castiello's eye cheered him; all was not completely well with Mr. Castiello. Conversely, all was not completely ill with Mr. Hughes.

Mr. Castiello smiled faintly. "Still optimistic," he murmured. "You know nobody; you have presented no letters of introduction. How will you get an audience?"

"Bet," urged William. Certainly the decision was not yet made, and that was something.

"Why should I take your money? Let us have another drink." He eyed William gravely. "Do you imagine we can allow you to take this business? It would be a most unfortunate precedent. The Aiken has no reputation here; shall we allow you to establish one?"

His glance credited William with intelligence enough to supply the answer, which was obviously no. "The same?" he invited.

Mr. Castiello was drunk, but further drinking did not make him more so—or more indiscreet. William left him committed to the indefinite pursuit of "the same," and retired to a consultation with his friend the bronze General in the Plaza.

Introductions? Mr. Arziñega had requested a visit from a representative of the Aiken Typewriter Company, and William was it. Was not his card introduction enough? He recalled the impressive spectacle of Mr. Castiello strolling in the Plaza with the pompous Arziñega, clad like Solomon in his glory. Did they measure a man's business importance by his social standing?

Graft? William was modern enough to discount the stories he had heard about that. Goods could be sold on merit, plus salesmanship; but how to exercise salesmanship on a man whose courteous discourtesy shed his best efforts at approach as a duck's feathers shed water?

William sighed. He was learning things about the export, and the romance of it was fading into unexpected perplexity. The fifty typewriters assumed the importance of five hundred. If he could not sell these, could he sell any? He thought with the beginnings of panic of the money he had spent—double, triple the expenses of Georgia, U. S. A. And it was old man Aiken's money. Could he ever justify it? He must; but could he?

HE was braced for another bland postponement when he presented his card again in the morning, and almost lost his breath when the page returned to usher him at once into the Presence.

"Ah, *joven*," murmured Mr. Arziñega. Again William's ignorance was his protection: *joven* meant *young man*, and he was a young man. He did not know that Mr. Arziñega was being subtly disrespectful.

Mr. Hughes of the Aiken Typewriter Company unlimbered his flawless sample and went skillfully into action. His scanty vocabulary hampered him verbally, but pride in the smooth mechanism under his fingers lent him confidence. And Mr. Arziñega responded. He manifested just the right degree of interest—not the overwarm praise of the gentle soul who would avoid argument,

nor the polite assent of the incurable skeptic. So when William reached that point in his exposition where the victim was given an opportunity to succumb, he was happily ripe for a shock.

Mr. Arziñega extended a pudgy hand, took up the cover and set it down firmly over the machine.

"I thank you," said he cordially. He rose and offered his hand. "You will excuse me now? *Adiós*, Señor 'Oogis. Much pleasure."

Even the unpracticed William did not miss the ominous finality of that "*Adiós*." He did not say "*Hasta luego*." He said, definitely, good-by. In effect, farewell—forever.

"When—when shall I return?"

"It will not be necessary," beamed Mr. Arziñega. "You have been very kind. I think we shall buy the Overton."

"In what—in what—" William searched his vocabulary. "In what respect do you find it better?"

"The keyboard. Our stenographers are accustomed to it."

The sinking feeling was slightly relieved. "The keyboard," explained William, "is exactly the same—the universal keyboard with Spanish characters." He was proud of his foresight in making sure of that. "See—the same characters, the same positions. And the superiority of the Aiken is here—"

He looked up confidently to see the defense crumble, and instead saw Mr. Arziñega curiously disconcerted.

"Perhaps it is not the keyboard," admitted that gentleman hurriedly. "It may be that I mistake. I am not practical in these things."

"If I might interview some of your stenographers—"

"It will not be necessary," Mr. Arziñega repeated, still with the apparent assumption that William would be glad to hear it. "You will excuse me now?"

He extended his hand again, and William mechanically took it. It is probable that Mr. Arziñega bowed him out with expressions of high esteem, but William found himself in the street with the sensation of having been wafted out physically through solid masonry. That sixth sense of the salesman told him that he had made a good selling talk, insisted that Mr. Arziñega had been convinced; but he had no seventh sense to tell him why Mr. Arziñega had so nervously and finally refused to buy. Graft, thought William savagely.

IT was not until he was smoking a bitterly reflective pipe in the Plaza, sitting in the shade of an orange tree and gazing with vacant intensity at the bronze whisks of his friend the General, that he found a flaw in this conviction: a grafter is for sale to the highest bidder, and Mr. Arziñega had not even hinted at a bribe. William was not sure just how such a thing was done, but surely a grafter would have known!

Idly William conceived the illusion that the bronze General intently returned his gaze; but of course the General was only inviting his brave men to go on and be killed. William followed the line of the wildly pointing sword with a whimsical eye, and grinned absently. Apparently the patriotic General was inciting his army to storm the Presidential Palace.

"*¡Holá!* My friend!"

It was Mr. Castiello. William greeted him cheerfully, to hide the fact that he would rather have seen anyone else.

"A little drink, by way of *aperitivo*, does it not appeal to you?"

"Too hot," refused Bill, still cheerfully. The suave Mr. Castiello should get no satisfaction out of gloating.

But Mr. Castiello only sat down and entered on desultory conversation. After a moment that indefinite something began again to whisper in William's ear: Castiello was trying to get him to talk; Castiello wanted to know—what? And so he talked, guardedly, all the while pursuing with a detached, puzzled portion of his brain that elusive something. His adversary's too-cordial manner convinced him that he had a possible trick left in a losing hand; but he could not find it.

He departed to lunch as puzzled as ever; and having reinforced his deductive powers with food, he stretched himself on the bed in his room and contemplated the stout cupids flapping about the ceiling, seeking inspiration. The wreck of his export career trembled about his ears, but something of which Castiello knew prevented it from falling—yet. What was it that Castiello wanted to know?

He fell asleep, finally, and dreamed of a girl who was waiting for him in far-off Georgia. She wore a rose-colored party frock and held out her hands to him, smiling. He leaped forward and caught her in his arms, swayed into the swift light measure of the dance. A peremptory touch fell on his shoulder; confound it, somebody was cutting in. It was (Continued on page 130)

Mamselle Chérie

By George Gibbs

With
Illustrations
By the Author

The Story So Far:

THE gilded youth of 1921 glowed doubly golden in Cherry Mohun. Wealth was hers, and great beauty; hers too were the fine verve and freedom of a generation that had repudiated restraint—hers the cocktails in teacups, the casual swear-word, the midnight motoring at high speed, and the love-making that was not slow. And yet—Cherry had driven an ambulance in France, and had a code of her own to which she adhered with some tenacity.

To young-old Doctor David Sangree—a scientist just returned to his America after some years spent abroad in research and in work for the Near East Relief—to him, Cherry was at once a problem, a delight and a horror. Sangree had been introduced to Cherry and her family by his lawyer George Lycett—partly because Lycett had invested Sangree's funds (of which he had been in charge during the scientist's absence abroad) in enterprises managed by Cherry's self-made millionaire father.

Something in Sangree's first obvious amazement at Cherry's most undébutante sophistication provoked the girl to shock him further; and when her father spoiled an afternoon for her by requesting that she spend it entertaining Sangree, the girl was moved to take revenge. She invited Sangree to go riding with her—dared him, in fact. And when he accepted, though he confessed that he had not ridden in a long time, she had the groom give him her brother's vicious horse Centipede.

Sangree was thrown, but he got into the saddle again and rode Centipede to a finish ahead of Cherry and her mount. Only when they had returned, and Sangree slid from the saddle in a faint at the gate of the stableyard, did Cherry realize that Sangree's arm had been broken in his fall at the beginning of their ride.

This was the beginning of a growing friendship between these two so-different people, though Mamselle Chérie had many other strings to her bow—in particular the aviator Dick Wilberforce, the ex-soldier Jim Cowan and the wealthy and middle-aged man-about-town John Chichester. She showed a distinct interest in Sangree, however, and he found himself going to divers social affairs for the sake of meeting her and becoming acquainted with this strange and speed-mad younger set of American society.



The wrinkle remained. She would have to stop taking the difficulties of life so seriously.

The Story Continues:

AMONG David Sangree's social assets was an important club, the Olympian. He had kept up his membership during the years of his wanderings, more in deference to the wishes of his dead father, than to any desire to avail himself of its privileges. There had been little time to spare for a club until his book was ready to be launched

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into the little backwash of the literary sea where works such as his found their haven.

But with the proofs out of his hands, Sangree formed the habit of dropping in at the Olympian in the late afternoon to read the papers or to chat with George Lycett, who still continued, after a fashion, to be his mentor and guide. In a way the atmosphere of the place suited Sangree admirably.

Of the acquaintanceships which Sangree resumed, that with John Chichester was least to his liking. But the older man, for no reason that Sangree could discover except the relationship that had existed between John Chichester the elder and Sangree's father,—who had been the lawyer for the Chichester estate,—saw fit to seek him out whenever he appeared and make him the recipient of confidences which neither interested nor amused him. But Sangree was as reticent in his antipathies as in his likings, for the sight of suffering had made him kind, and he had no wish to offend a man who so frankly offered his friendship. So he listened while Chichester talked, and spent an evening at the great house on the Park, where Mrs. Chichester still presided with old-fashioned elegance.

But Chichester kept another apartment farther downtown, where he lived *en garçon* and where dinners of much less elegance and dignity were provided. Sangree had discovered that, except in so far as his income had been affected by the taxes and the depreciation of his securities, the Great War had passed over John Chichester without changing so much as a hair of his head or a perception within it. He was a man of the world in its lesser rather than its greater sense, and aside from the family and business duties required of him, which he assumed with some punctilio, he had dedicated his life to the pursuit of pleasure.

But as he admitted to Sangree with much concern, he was now growing older. His stomach wasn't what it used to be. The sentimental adventure jaded him. His mother wanted him to marry.

Sangree listened in surprise to the confession, the frankness of which he was sure had been stimulated by an excellent dinner (three stars, "Flapper's Blue Book") which had preceded a dance that Chichester had declined.

"She says I've got to have children," he confided. "Old name, and all that sort of thing. Terrible responsibility—old name and money. Have to be on your guard all the time against scheming mothers and ambitious daughters. Damned nuisance, match-makers."

Ha-ha! Girls of another sort had been more in his line. Nothing expected of a chap except money. That was easy. But marriage!

"You know, Sangree," he went on in a lowered tone, "I like you. Sensible sort of chap. If your father was alive I'd probably talk to him. You're the hereditary confidant of the Chichesters. You don't mind, do you?"

Sangree shrugged. "My opinions are worthless."

"Well, you don't mind listening?"

"No."

"Well, my medico says I've got to marry at once if I hope to have children—the sooner the better. You know, I *have* been going it rather strong. I've got to stop philandering about and settle down. I really want to, you know. And I'm not such a bad sort. I'd go straight in double-harness, I think. But damn it all! Sangree, a man defies the Fates when he thinks of marrying nowadays—that is, if he thinks of marrying in the younger crowd; and you know I'm not the kind to be satisfied with a spinster aunt. I can't let the *mater* in for a daughter-in-law who would turn the town house upside down and make a country-club of Rosselyn Towers. She wouldn't stand for that, you know. She has her dignity, and so has the name."

As he paused, Sangree shrugged.

"You should have married



Cherry was not too stupid to realize that she was there to be inspected by the old lady as the object of John Chichester's matrimonial intentions.

before the marriageable females had become so—ah—tempestuous," he ventured.

"Quite so. But then, I didn't. Oh, I don't mind their being tempestuous—or even ill-mannered; of course the war brought on all that. But I do object to their airs of familiarity with men, their damnable omniscience and self-sufficiency. It goes against the grain."

"But their airs of familiarity," Sangree found himself saying

"I've told you that my opinions have no value."

"But they have. I know you're not my sort. I'm hardened. But they must rather shock a chap like you."

Sangree lighted his cigarette deliberately before he replied.

"It takes a good many kinds of people to make up a world," he said with a slow smile. "Your little world is merely a reflection of the larger one. There must be bad little angels even in heaven, and I'm sure that there are good little devils in the other place."

"Oh, I don't say most of 'em aren't all right," protested Chichester. "But if you knew the stories they tell about the Meriwether girl—"



"No, and I don't think I care to hear," said Sangree.

"But you do know that the little Everard kid drinks too much at every party—and that the Towne girl thinks no more of kissing a boy than she does of—"

"Really, Chichester, I'd rather keep my illusions, if you don't mind."

"Illusions!" muttered the older man—with a shrug. "I didn't know any man could have illusions nowadays."

"Well, I have," Sangree said cheerfully. "I prefer to think of these young acquaintances of yours and mine as children who should be spanked and put to bed. Besides, I don't like mentioning names. If you don't mind—"

Sangree made a motion as though to rise, but Chichester laid a hand on his arm.

"Oh, I say, I thought everyone knew."

"Gossip of this sort doesn't interest me."

"It would, if you were thinking of marrying one of 'em."

"But then I'm not, you see. The marks of—ah—condescension I have received," he said with dry humor, "are merely flattering to my years, Chichester, not to my—ah—seductiveness."

rather to his own surprise, "aren't they the very tokens of innocence?"

"In another set they wouldn't be," said Chichester. "In another set, girls don't mind being pawed; and when they don't mind being pawed, they don't mind being kissed. But the young woman of society today tries to ape her frailer sister—even the well brought up ones, by Jove! She has a horror of not being a success. Good God! Sangree, you've met a lot of these young people. What d'ye think of them? Tell me."

Chichester grinned, but he pulled jerkily at his small wisp of mustache.

"Ah-ha! That's good, Sangree—very good. But then, you're modest. I'm not. You're an idealist. I'm not. You've been out of the world. I've been very much in it. I'm under no illusions with regard to my personal charm. But I'd be a fool if I didn't know that from several points of view I'm a damned desirable *parti*. There's the money, you know."

"Yes—and the name," added Sangree drolly.

"Yes, that too," Chichester went on, his self-importance oblivious of the undercurrent of his companion's irony. "I don't flatter myself that I could win out without that. After all, you know, what a woman wants most in this world is to fill other women's hearts with envy."

"I wonder."

"Perhaps you don't believe that."

"I didn't say I didn't believe it. I merely said I wondered." And then slowly: "Evidently you feel very sure of yourself."

CHICHESTER extinguished his cigarette in the tray.

"Why shouldn't I?" he said with a matter-of-fact air. "I've always gotten everything I wanted. And now I want a wife." His voice sank a note as he went on as though thinking aloud. "If I were only certain—if I were only certain—"

His companion made no comment, and Chichester continued: "You know, I envy you your illusions, Sangree. It doesn't pay to know too much. When you've knocked about as I have, you lose your faith."

"That's a pity," said Sangree. "But isn't one's faith in the virtue of others merely a—ah—reflection of one's own faith in one's own?"

"Eh? What's that? Faith in one's own virtue? By George! Maybe. I wonder." He leaned forward, his brows tangled. "I say, you do think a bit, don't you. But if you'd had your leg pulled as I have, perhaps you wouldn't think so well of people."

"Perhaps. But then, I haven't had my leg pulled, though it's there, I believe, for that purpose," said Sangree warmly. He hesitated for a long moment; and then, scarcely conscious of his own earnestness: "But I won't let myself believe that the whole younger crowd is going to the devil," he said, "because some silly little fool drinks more than is good for her."

Having said the words, it was too late to recall them, but it was with something of a sense of shock that Sangree realized how greatly his point of view had changed in the few months since his return to America. The very phrases he had once used to George Lycett, but with what a different interpretation! He was aware dimly of John Chichester's voice breaking on his retrospection with a note of livelier optimism.

"Right-o, old chap! Glad to hear you say that. That's what I've been wanting to think. That's what I do think, by Jove. But they care so damned little what either of us thinks. Just full of animal spirits—fire of life and—er—all that sort of thing. No harm in 'em, though—what? Just spoiled, driving on a loose snaffle. A little of the curb, and they'll come down to riding-school manners."

"That might depend on who did the curbing," said Sangree.

"Right you are. Oh, there's a way to manage 'em. Responsibility—position—dignity to live up to." He laid an impressive hand on his companion's knee. "See here, Sangree. I might as well tell you. It's no secret. The girl I'm going to marry is Cherry Mohun."

THE look of astonishment in Sangree's face faded into a grin as he slowly relaxed on the leather divan.

"Ah," he muttered, "you're lucky, Chichester."

"I knew you'd agree, old chap. Gorgeous girl! Just a little out of hand at home. But then, she'll age a bit."

Sangree thought for a moment, and then with a whimsical smile: "I appreciate your confidences; would you mind telling me when it's to be announced?"

"I say, you're going a little fast, old man," laughed Chichester. "We're not engaged. I haven't even spoken to her yet."

"Oh," gasped Sangree. "I see."

"But the *mater* is with me. Charming woman, Mrs. Mohun. Very sensible. Spoils her daughter a little—but then, who wouldn't?"

"Yes, very charming." Sangree turned around toward his confidant with a sudden jerk of exasperation. "See here, Chichester, it occurs to me that before you get—ah—so damned cocksure of yourself, you'd better say a word or two to Miss Mohun herself."

"Oh—ah—yes, of course, Chérie! Well, rather, I will—when the right times comes. Can't move too fast in a thing like that. Nurse her along with the *mater* helping. Ah, she's keen for it, and why wouldn't she be? Besides,"—he lowered his voice and spoke in a serious tone,—“besides, you know, Jim Mohun might come to a crash at any time.”

Sangree was no longer listening indifferently.

"You believe that?" he asked.

"Yes. He's shaky—has been for months. I wouldn't mention it to anyone but you. But I know you're a friend of the family. The Chichester estate has some of his paper, most of it secured by stock. But if this story gets out, nothing can keep his companies from touching rock bottom. Mohun has been slipping. Well, you know the way I feel about things. I don't want to be too hard on him on account of the family—on account of Chérie—so I've let things drift along."

Sangree glanced up quickly, surprising a rather shrewd look in Chichester's expression. And he listened with a keener ear for his own misfortunes. "Some of his concerns are making money," Chichester went on with a careless shrug, "but he was deep in coppers, and you know where coppers are. There are some people who aren't going to be so—er—friendly as I am, and money grows tighter every week. Some people thought last fall would help matters, but it didn't. Now they say March or April will see this country through the worst. But I don't believe Jim Mohun can last that long."

"That's very unfortunate," said Sangree, deeply perturbed, "very unfortunate."

"Yes, isn't it? Unfortunate for everyone concerned. I'm speaking very freely. I hope you'll consider it in confidence. I'm merely telling you the truth. It's inside information. Mohun still carries his bluff. He's whistling to keep his courage up. He has to. But the first intimation the public gets of this will bring an explosion. And then—"

Chichester made a suggestive motion of slender shoulders and thin fingers ceilingward.

SANGREE bent his head in thought, his dream of a scientific expedition, which he had expected to make at his own expense, now gone a-glimmering, in the light of this astounding revelation. And yet he saw no reason to doubt its truth.

"You seem to be affected," said Chichester, curious as to Sangree's somber expression.

Sangree shrugged and wagged his head.

"Rather," he replied quietly. "Most of the money I've got in the world is in his Textile Mills."

"You!" broke in the other. "You! How on earth—?"

Sangree had a sudden sense of puerility before this fellow whose opinions he had held so lightly.

"George Lycett. I left all my affairs in his hands when I went away," he said. "Textile Mills promised well in war times."

"War brides! He capitalized those!" Chichester broke off with an air of restraint. "My dear chap! And you're in deep? Where was the stock when you bought it?"

"Ninety-three. And it's twenty-one today."

"How many shares?" asked the other.

"Roughly—two thousand," he said awkwardly.

Chichester emitted a tenuous whistle.

"There were some new contracts, large orders," protested Sangree helplessly.

"Moonshine. The big plant is all but closed down now. My advice is to sell. Get what you can—a hundred shares at a time."

"You know, you've rather taken the wind out of me, Chichester," said the victim weakly.

"I'm sorry. I didn't know I was bringing you bad news. You student chaps haven't any business in the market. And Lycett! He fell under Mohun's spell, I suppose? It's a pity—the more so, because Mohun means well. But he got rich too fast."

Sangree rose. The blow had hit him hard, and there seemed no possible chance that Chichester could be mistaken. What would he have had to gain by lying to Sangree, who had made his painful admission after learning the facts? They must be true.

"Thanks, Chichester," he said steadily as he offered his hand. "I'll have to think this out. There's nothing to do tonight, of course."

"I'm sorry, old man. Don't take my advice unless you want to, but it's the best I can give you. I wish you had come to me at first. Come to me downtown if there's any way I can help."

(Continued on page 104)



Alicia stared. "What is it, Jim? Your face—" Mohun strove to keep erect. Then he toppled sidewise upon his chair, rolling heavily to the floor.

A Tip from Fogarty

By James K. Hanna

The fourth of the Great Graft Syndicate stories, in which much that has been anticipated really begins to happen.

Illustrated by Ray Rohn



"I beg pardon, miss," he said, "but if Mr. Murchison asks, shall I say you will be back soon?"

WHEN he hired the three penniless begging-letter writers,—Mr. Tubbel, Mr. Skink and Miss Rosa Lind,—Roger Murchison, the multimillionaire, had done so with an almost vain hope that they would save him from insanity or suicide, the result of an insomnia that would hardly permit him a moment of sleep. The success of his plan had already far exceeded his most eager expectations. Not only was he now able to sleep at night, but through them he had actually discovered one of the missing dancing figures of the Vase of Apollo of Corinth.

The insomnia that had threatened Mr. Murchison's reason had been caused by that wealthy bachelor's inability to stop for a moment, by day or by night, his mental attempts to recreate the two dancing figures of the famous Markham Vase, and it was in the extremity of his fear for his reason that he hit upon the fantastic plan of hiring the three needy beings to act as a Graft Syndicate.

"I have twenty-five million dollars that will be worth nothing to me if I am dead or become insane," said Mr. Murchison to

himself, "but if this Graft Syndicate can be set going and is clever, perhaps I may be able to spur my mind from the thought of the missing dancing figures—by setting it to outwit the grafters, and thus avoid the madness that threatens me."

This plan, as has been indicated, had succeeded beyond his utmost hopes. At first, so inexperienced were his three grafters, he had been obliged to plan to defraud himself; but even this took his mind off his monomania. When he was thinking, "How can I make my Graft Syndicate believe it is defrauding me when it is not?" he was certainly not thinking, "What are the two missing figures on the Markham Vase?" And additional distraction came through his finding Miss Rosa Lind—the head of his Graft Syndicate—so attractive that his aunt Ann Warker actually told him he was in love with the girl, which was, indeed, the truth.

For a while, it is true, the operations of the Graft Syndicate had been almost too inefficient and farcical to be taken seriously, but Roger Murchison had to admit that in buncoing him out of fifty thousand dollars by means of a pretended psychic and a supposed Greek dancing-girl "control" named Norna, the Graft Syndicate had at length and completely befooled him.

Roger Murchison was pleased that this should be the fact. He believed this small triumph would give his private grafters new spirit, but only the event could prove whether he was right or wrong in this belief. . . .

In the room that had been set aside in Murchison's Fifth Avenue home as the headquarters of his Graft Syndicate, Rosa Lind sat at her desk completing the few slight duties that fell to her as Murchison's pretended private secretary. The two other members of Mr. Murchison's Graft Syndicate sat near by, now and then casting uneasy glances at each other and now and then looking with even greater uneasiness toward Rosa Lind.

"There!" the young woman said at last, signing and sealing the final letter of her morning task. "And now to business!"

She swung her chair to face Mr. Carlo Dorio Skink and Mr. Horace Tubbel.

To her surprise, her enthusiasm met with no response in kind. The tall, thin Mr. Skink coughed uneasily and fondled his pointed red beard; and the short, stout Mr. Tubbel turned red.

"You tell her, Skink," said Mr. Tubbel hoarsely.

Mr. Skink, thus commanded, coughed again.

"It's this way, Miss Lind," he said with bravado oddly tinged with fear of Rosa Lind: "we don't want to graft any more. We want to quit, and we're going to quit."

"What—going to quit! Going to quit now?" cried Rosa Lind.

"That's right—going to quit now," said Mr. Skink. "We've got enough."



"Say, don't try to act so innocent. The party we want is in this house, and you know it."

"It's like this," puffed Mr. Tubbel: "I'm an actor by rights—a movie actor; and Skink's a poet; and we've got to think of our careers. We've got to get to work on our careers. We've been too neglectful of them. Circumstances—"

"But you don't mean that you two,"—Rosa Lind hunted for a word,—"that you two miserable rats are going to desert just when we are getting this game started properly? Come, now! Can't you see we are just getting the proper stride—just getting our proper form?"

"It is like this, Miss Lind," said Mr. Skink. "We have enough—Tubby and I have. We took fifty thousand from Murchison by that Bergatz bunco, and he gave us fifty thousand more, under his agreement to double whatever we buncoed him out of. That's one hundred thousand dollars—thirty-three thousand for each of us; and me and Tubby have talked it over, and it is enough. It is more money than we ever expected to have."

"And we're no fools," said Tubby. "It was one thing for us to come here to bunco a fool that was half crazy and woozy for want of sleep, and it is another thing to go up against him when he is as good as cured, and as sane as anybody."

Rosa Lind frowned at her two partners.

"Trash," she said. "Trash! This is what comes of dealing with gutter trash. Just when real success is possible, you fail me. Oh!"

All possible anger and bitterness and disappointment were crowded into her final exclamation, and she arose and walked to the window, turning her back on the two men.

"Well, we may be trash—although nobody but a woman would dare say so to our faces; but we're no fools," puffed Mr. Tubbel. "We've got plenty out of this, and we know why you don't want to quit."

"What do you mean?" Rosa Lind cried, facing him.

"Now, don't get huffy, my dear," said Mr. Tubbel. "Me and Skink can see a thing or two now and then. You know what I mean. This Murchison is in love with you—that's what I mean; and I don't say you're not soft on him yourself. So there it is! He's not going to jail you, while he feels that way; but me and Skinky aint any little tootsy-wootsies of his—"

"You're low—coarse and low," said Rosa Lind. "I cannot expect anything but coarseness and cowardice from you, and I should never have expected anything else."

She turned again to the window. She stood so long looking out that Mr. Tubbel became nervous. He wiped his face with a handkerchief of glaring colors, and cleared his throat and shuffled his feet on the floor.

She turned to Mr. Skink.

"You too," she queried, "share Mr. Tubbel's views?"

"I'm quitting," said Mr. Skink in a low but firm tone. "I'm through too."

"Because you are afraid?" she asked. "The contract with Mr. Murchison gives us absolute immunity from prosecution."

"Listen to me," said Mr. Skink. "You can't make a contract to permit the breaking of the law. I quit now, while the quitting is good."

He arose and put out his hand for his hat.

"Of course, you can go on grafting if you want to," he said.

"I?" said Rosa Lind. "That is nonsense, isn't it? I'm not the Graft Syndicate. We three are."

If you two quit, it all ends, doesn't it?"

"Well, that's how I look at it," said Mr. Tubbel. "When Skinky and I quit, we end it. And so we quit."

"So, good-by!" said Mr. Skink.

"Wait!" exclaimed Rosa Lind imperatively. "You'll not quit and leave me here, after what Tubbel said. If one quits, all quit!"

She went to the closet and donned her hat and coat and was the first to leave the room. She did not pause to say farewell to Roger Murchison, who was in his study. At the street entrance, Miggs the butler held the door wide.

"I beg pardon, miss," he said, "but if Mr. Murchison asks, shall I say you will be back soon?"

Rosa Lind opened her purse and rummaged in its contents in a truly feminine manner, as if seeking something, and Mr. Skink and Mr. Tubbel went out onto the stoop. When they were well out of earshot, she looked up at Miggs and smiled in a friendly manner.

"I will be back in half an hour, you may tell him," she said.

"I was wondering whether I had my pass-key or not."

She went out, and Miggs closed the heavy door.

FOR an hour or more Roger Murchison had been pacing his study floor, pausing now and again to stare unsmilingly at the walls or out of the window while he allowed his brain to run on at will. He was clad in his long, dingy brown dressing-gown, and as he paced, his loose slippers flopped up and down at the heels. Three days had gone by since Rosa Lind and her two confederates had passed Miggs on their way out of the house, and none of the three had returned. Murchison stopped in his walk and pushed the button that summoned Miggs. The butler entered.

"Repeat what you said, Miggs," Murchison commanded, frowning.

"Yes, Mr. Roger," said the butler. "I was standing at the door quite as usual, sir, when the lady and the two gentlemen came down—"

"Miss Lind and Skink and Tubbel?"

"Just so, sir. I opened the street door. 'I beg pardon, miss,' I said, 'but if Mr. Murchison asks, shall I say you will be back soon?' She looked in her purse then, sir, to find her key. 'You

may tell him, Miggs," she said, "that I will return in half an hour." Then she followed the two gentlemen out, and I closed the door, sir."

"And you saw the two cars outside?"

"Yes sir; when I opened the door, sir, I saw Mr. Skink's touring car and Mr. Tubbel's limousine. I think I may say I heard them depart after the door closed, but I did not see them, sir. I do not know whether the lady entered either car or went afoot."

"And that is all you know, is it?"

"I'm sorry, sir, but that is the extent of my direct knowledge."

Murchison looked at the butler sharply.

"What do you mean by that? Do you know anything else?" he demanded.

"I hesitated to speak of it, sir," said Miggs, "because you seemed sufficiently disturbed by the young lady's disappearance, but I have observed some suspicious-looking characters hanging about the neighborhood."

"You mean in the Avenue?"

"Across the Avenue, sir, and in front of this house. Two very ordinary-looking gentlemen, sir—plain-clothes policemen, I should judge them to be, if I might venture an opinion."

"My God!" cried Roger Murchison. "If anything has happened to Rosa Lind! Miggs!"

"Yes, Mr. Roger!"

"Are those men still hanging about?"

Miggs went to the window and peered between the curtains.

"I seem to observe one concealing himself in Mrs. Cordonville's areaway, sir," he said.

Murchison pressed close to Miggs and looked out. A man was standing as Miggs had said.

"Miggs," said Murchison, "go across the way and bring that man to me here. Whatever the fellow's business may be, he has no right to spy on this house."

While Miggs was on his master's errand, Murchison again paced the room nervously.

"Confound it!" he muttered. "This is what comes of dealing with rascals like that miserable Skink and disgusting Tubbel. I have been harboring criminals, I have no doubt."

Which, take it as we may, was a remarkable statement to come from a man who had been voluntarily maintaining a private Graft Syndicate. . . .

A few minutes later Roger Murchison, seated at his study table, faced the man Miggs had brought there.

"That aint none of your business," the fellow had just said, in answer to Mr. Murchison's first question, "or anyway, it aint none of your business as far as I'm concerned."

"It is my business," said Murchison with emphasis. "You were watching my house—a private gentleman's home; and I have a right to know why you were doing so. Either you are a criminal intent on burglarizing this house,—and I do not believe that, since you have permitted yourself to be brought here,—or you are some sort of spy engaged in watching the movements of some one in this house. I choose to think you are a spy. Doubtless you would call yourself a detective. Very well, then: is it Skink or Tubbel you want?"

Roger Murchison trusted this bold query to draw some expression to the fellow's face. It did more than that; it brought a laugh to his lips.

"Oh, them two simps!" the man laughed. "We got them three days ago. They was easy, chasing around town in their giddy automobiles, like kings or emperors, or something. No sir, it's a slicker one than them we are after."

Murchison gazed straight into the man's eyes.

"A woman?" he asked. "A young woman?"

The man made no answer.

"Ah, I see! It is a young woman you seek," said Murchison triumphantly.

"I aint saying," declared the fellow.

Murchison laughed.

"My good man," he said, "you are just a bit too simple for this trade of yours, and I venture to predict you will not be engaged in it long. I know as little about the detective profession as any man now living. I dare say, but I know that a sleuth—if that is what you call yourself—who does his work in such a way that even the aged butler of the establishment he is watch-

ing observes him, is a poor sort of detective."

"Unless he happens to want to be seen, hey?" asked the fellow. "Unless, maybe, his orders are to hang around and be seen."

"What do you mean by that?" asked Murchison quickly.

"Maybe I don't know what I mean," said the man, "and maybe I mean that one way to find a bird is to throw a stone into the bush and make it flutter. Say, don't try to act so innocent. The party we want is in this house, and you know it."

"In this house?"

"Yes, and maybe more than one party we want is here, too," said the man roughly. "You got me up here, and I'll say something, now that I'm here. We've had our eyes on this house for more than a couple of weeks now, and we know mighty near what this house is. It's a den of bunco men and grafters; that's what it is."

Roger Murchison paled. That word of his private Graft Syndicate should leak to the outside world he had never thought. It

was, considering the state of his feeling for Rosa Lind, the last thing he could have desired. He dropped at once the haughty tone he had been using.

"Listen, my friend," he said more graciously, "a great mistake has evidently been made. How any word of my private Graft Syndicate may have reached the ears of your superiors I do not know; but I assure you—and ask you most earnestly to tell those above you—that any graft business originating

here was my private affair and carried on at my request."

The detective smiled wryly.

"Some guessed that," he said.

"Then they guessed correctly," said Roger Murchison. "Let me explain the facts of the affair. I have suffered for months from insomnia—"

With careful detail Murchison explained, and the man listened, until the whole story of the selection, hiring and activities of Mr. Skink, Mr. Tubbel and Rosa Lind had been told, even to the means by which they had buncoed their willing victim. When he had ended the tale, Roger Murchison smiled. But the detective did not smile.

"That sounds straight," he said, "and it sounds as if you thought you was telling the troot, the whole troot and nothing but the troot, as the saying is; but it aint but the part troot. What you know about the Henderson Case, and the Barker Case, and the Middletown Case? Anything? And what do you know about the Schemnitz Case and the Colliver Case and the Doolittle Case? Nothing?"

"What!" cried Roger Murchison.

"All right, friend," said the man. "There you are, then. If you don't know about them, they're your answer. Graft and bunco cases, all six of them, and some of the rawest, roughest graft ever pulled off in New York, and all of them worked from this house by Red-line Rose and a gang of crooks—including, if you please, this here Skink and this here Tubbel you named the



"Humph!" she exclaimed. "And where did you get this document?"

names of. It aint for me to say, friend, but it looks like you had sat there sucking a thumb while a bunch of slick guys put it all over you—that is," he added, "if you aint the head of the gang, at that!"

Murchison made himself as calm as he could. He closed his hands until the nails bit the flesh. He was weak with surprise, as many a man has been when similarly overwhelmed by the absolutely unexpected.

"As you say," he said finally, "unless I am the head of the gang myself."

"And if you are," said the detective, "you're a slick one, but you'll be slicker if we don't pin it on you this time."

Murchison placed the forefinger of his left hand against his temple, as was his habit when thinking deeply.

"Do you want to arrest me?" he asked.

"That aint my order," said the man. "Wait and watch is my orders."

"Just so!" said Murchison. "You mentioned, however, that the—the one you were seeking was in this house. If you do not mean me, you must of course mean the young woman you call Red-line Rose."

"Have that your own way," said the man.

"I merely meant to suggest," said Murchison, "that you are at liberty to search the house for her if you wish. It might lessen your labors."

"You mean that?" asked the man eagerly.

"Certainly. One moment, please."

In answer to the bell, Miggs appeared at the door.

"I believe you rang, sir?"

"Yes, Miggs," said Murchison. "This is a gentleman of the detective force, Miggs. He desires to search the house. You will aid him in a most minutely careful search, Miggs, and then report to me."

An hour later Miggs tapped gently on Roger Murchison's door.

"Nothing was found out of the ordinary, sir," he said. "The gentleman has taken his departure."

"Did he seem disappointed, Miggs?" Murchison asked.

"If I may venture the opinion, sir," said Miggs, "he seemed much put out about it. He used most ungentlemanly language."

ROGER MURCHISON'S aunt Ann Warker, who was worth in dollars and cents—and in common sense, too—even more than Roger Murchison, greeted Miggs in her unconventionally friendly fashion as she entered the house, and asked him if Roger was in.

"In his study, Miss Warker," said Miggs, "and very low in his mind, indeed, if I may say so. Shall I tell him you are here?"

"No," she said sharply. "He's a fool. I'll go up."

It was characteristic of Miss Warker that she stalked in upon Roger Murchison after the briefest possible knock on the door, and thus she caught him in the act of raising his head from his arms, which were folded on his table.

"Moping!" she exclaimed. "Mooning and moping! Well?"

"She has been arrested," said Murchison ever so drearily. Ann Warker took the scrap of paper he pushed toward her and went to the window to read it, for the light was better there.

"Humph!" she exclaimed when she had studied the scrap of paper, turning it over and over and even holding it to the light.

"And where, may I ask, did you get this precious document?"

"By mail. It came by mail," said Murchison.

"And who, pray, is Dan Fogarty?"

"A detective—a man who was watching the house."

Murchison moved uneasily in his chair, like a man who is too downcast to care what happens. Ann Warker, with her back to the light, studied him.

"You're a fool, Roger Murchison," she said sharply. "What do you care for that chit, anyway? And I suppose you've worked yourself into a state again over it all. How are you sleeping?"

"Can you ask it? I slept miserably last night—the most distressful dreams!"

Ann Warker, her face in the shadow, smiled, and it was a happy smile. She loved her gaunt, middle-aged nephew as only an unmarried aunt can love the son of her only sister, and she cared little enough for trouble of a sort that let him sleep. A modicum of trouble is good for a man; it takes his mind off greater troubles. If worry over the fate of Red-line Rose kept Roger Murchison from nights of sleepless thinking of the missing figure of the Markham Vase, she was well satisfied that he should have a little of such worry.

"Dreams!" she said scornfully, however. "Dreams—that's about all you are good for, I dare say. Do you believe this nonsense?"

She tossed the paper on the table.

"What?" Murchison asked, raising his head suddenly.

"You poor silly!" said Ann Warker. "I do verily believe you think this is real. A note from some fraud who signs any name he chooses and scrawls, 'Red-line Rose is arrested; wait for news,' and you swallow it like a gudgeon. You do need a guardian aunt, Roger Murchison! Lucky for you that you had a last glimmer of sense and telephoned me."

"You don't believe it, then?" Murchison asked eagerly. "You think she is still free?"

"I think she is still free enough to bunco a poor half-wit like you," said his very frank aunt. "You are the very limit of gullibility, my boy. Let me ask you one thing: What have you to go on, in all this nonsense? Two men lurking across the street! Your precious Rosa Lind and her two pretty companions stay away from your house a few days. Miggs brings one of the lurking men to you, and he tells you a pretty cock-and-bull story and then writes a letter. What else do you know?"

"Nothing," said Murchison reluctantly.

"Nothing indeed!" said Miss Ann. "A pretty thing to say! You know you hired these three sweet creatures to bunco you, don't you? Well?"

"You mean," cried Roger almost joyfully, "that this is a bunco scheme—that she is not arrested?"

"Roger Murchison," asked Ann Warker solemnly, "could you see through a stone wall if there was a plate glass window in it? Or are you totally blind? Do you read the newspapers? Did you ever know of six notable bunco cases, with a character with a name like Red-line Rose implicated, and not a line in the papers? Stuff and nonsense! You're being buncoed. You're getting what you paid to get, and you don't know it. Have you even so much as called up police headquarters?"

"Why, no, Aunt Ann," said Roger, laughing. "I have not."

"I did not think you had," said Ann Warker

scornfully. "To have done so would have shown at least a glimmer of common sense. I will ask police headquarters."

She put out her hand for the telephone that stood on the table, but before her hand could touch it, Roger had drawn the instrument beyond her reach.

"Wait!" he said.

"What now?" asked his aunt with some irritation.

"Wait!" he repeated. "You think too rapidly; you forget something now and then. You have (Continued on page 100)



Roger Murchison footed the columns. "Eighty-two thousand dollars," he said without emotion.

Mr. Flint of "The

By Fannie Kilbourne

Illustrated by Will Foster

THERE is no record of just when the first girl made up a sweetheart; but whenever it was, girls in books and plays have been doing it ever since. It has at last become altogether too trite to be tried anywhere but in real life. It came to Janice, however, with all the flame-trailing thrill of a brand-new inspiration one Sunday afternoon when she discovered her fiancé reading Lawrence Ballard Flint's department in *The Footlight*. Janice was assistant editor of *The Footlight*, and so the latest copy usually appeared on the living-room table of the apartment she and Betty Hood shared, some time before it was seen on the news-stands.

It would seem that Janice, already having one flesh-and-blood lover, had little need to resort to the ancient trick. Only Janice, however, knew how badly she needed another.

"Oh, Bob, I want to present you to my little cousin Janice Kendall. And you're not to vamp her. She's a prairie daisy, fresh from Farwell, N. D., and not used to wicked New Yorkers."

This was the way Robert Dodgson had come into Janice's life. She had looked up into his straightforward blue eyes and known that though he was a New Yorker, he was not wicked. One may have seen human nature even in Farwell, N. D.

"I'm going to vamp you," he had declared, looking down at her, "just as hard and as fast as I dare."

He had taken Janice home that evening in a taxi—his careless ignoring of the existence of such vehicles as street-cars and busses was part of the dominant, conquering way of him; and it was only a month later that Janice had taken the apartment with Betty, mainly so that she would have a place to invite Bob to dinner and have him call on her several times a week.

In two weeks more they were engaged, although they decided to wait a year or so before being married.

"I'm not going to have my wife living in some stuffy boarding-house or washing dishes in a three-room-and-kitchenette apartment!" Bob had declared with fond pride. "Inside of a year I'll have Denswood booming and be able to give you a regular establishment."

Janice, thrilling to the daring "my wife," had time for a moment's flash of certainty that Bob's business promise had been no idle boast. Bob would succeed; it needed no correspondence-course graduate in character-analysis to tell that. It was not alone his keen, intelligent eye and firm-set chin that promised; there was about him a sureness, a strong, confident poise, that was of the very stuff of which young success is made.

The idea of asking any further boon from the prodigal god of love who had given her Bob might never have occurred to Janice if she had not attended one particular Sunday afternoon's tea at the home of his aunt. Bob's Aunt Wilma was a stunning, slim young woman of possibly fifty, with shining hair done in the



most marceled mode, a step like a girl's, and a laugh that still had the ready ripple of youth in it. She always had young people around her, and that Sunday afternoon she introduced Janice to some eight or ten of them. She introduced her, moreover, as Bob's fiancée.

Now, in Farwell, N. D., an engagement is an engagement; one's fiancé is expected to stay with one, like a cup with a saucer. An engaged couple can be discovered in Farwell gatherings as easily as a pair of Siamese twins. Aunt Wilma's friends did not play the game this way. Her son, an easy-mannered young man, brought Janice tea and cakes and seated himself beside her; she saw Bob being taken possession of by a flapper with a sleeveless yellow dress and insolent young eyes.

Being an adaptable person, Janice made herself as pleasing as possible to her host's son, a pleasant-enough young man. It was a bit of a shock, though, as she and Bob were leaving, to have the flapper, whose name was Bea Pertwee (the hook-and-eye Pertwee), say casually:

"Glad to have met you, Miss Kendall. Hope I'll see you again some time," and then turn to Bob with an equally casual, "Well, I'll expect you Wednesday night."

Not for worlds would Janice have asked Bob what Miss Pertwee meant. Bob, however, offered the explanation voluntarily.

"Cute little kid, isn't she?" he asked. "Regular man-killer, Wilma says. She loses no time when she thinks she's spotted a prospect. While I was getting her tea, she said I must come up

Footlight"

The sparkling story of a lovable girl, a wrathful fiancé and a phantom rival who became real.



Bob stopped short in surprise—not exactly pleased surprise.

some night and see her chow. I made the usual polite murmuring, and the next thing I know, she says she expects me Wednesday."

"Going?" Janice inquired. The casual Bea could have made a question no more casually indifferent.

"Oh, probably not," said Bob. But Janice was woman enough to realize that the masculine vanity of which even Bob had his share had been tickled a bit by being selected as a man-killer's victim. It was right then that Janice began to wish she had another suitor.

She wished it more and more intently as the next few weeks went on. Bob did not call on Bea Wednesday evening, but he was at his Aunt Wilma's a good deal, and there were always girls there. Sometimes Janice was invited, sometimes not. It was evident that to Aunt Wilma and her friends an engagement was a mildly interesting but by no means sacred institution. Bob was as affectionate, as faithful as ever, but Janice was uneasy. Did Bob, or did he not, appear to treat her with a bit taken-for-granted attitude? A rival was the eternal solution to such a problem.

But from where was a rival to appear? Not among the supercilious young men she met at Aunt Wilma's—she neither liked

nor felt at home with them. So sudden had been Bob's courtship that she had had no time to cultivate other men before her engagement, nor any inclination to do so afterward. Until now! And now, it appeared, it was too late.

Then the inspiration came, the Sunday afternoon she had kept him waiting in her little living-room and had come in to find him reading Lawrence Ballard Flint's department in *The Footlight*. It was the ancient trick that occurred to Janice. For there was no real Lawrence Ballard Flint; he was a mere *nom de plume*, a person existing only in the minds of the readers of *The Footlight*.

The Footlight was like a white brow with delicately plucked eyebrows and soft curls escaping from a permanent wave. It led the unthinking to assume that there must be a good deal behind it. It was a smart, ultra-sophisticated, expensive-looking magazine dealing with society, the stage, the screen, with the most sensational developments in

modern painting, with the most discussed of the new books.

Readers, buying the latest copy of *The Footlight* on a newsstand in Atlanta, Duluth, Denver or Spokane, saw its dashing cover,—a flame and gold parrot against a dull velvet night, or something of that kind,—admired its portraits of Broadway's lovely exotics, its reproductions of the newest Impressionist paintings, or the tapestries in Mrs. Santer Van Horn's new place on the Sound, read its articles, which were evidently written by sophisticated men and women who knew not only art but also life, and marveled. *The Footlight* seemed a large-staffed, large-officed important undertaking to these readers.

As a matter of fact, *The Footlight's* office was about ten by twenty feet and boasted one straight-back chair, two swivel chairs, and two roll-top desks. At these desks sat David Lockwood, editor, and Janice, assistant editor—*The Footlight's* entire staff. This staff was as little as possible like what its readers would imagine. Janice seemed scarcely less a person to be connected with *The Footlight* than did the editor himself.

He was a friendly-looking, hard-working young journalist, who was likely to take off his coat and roll up his sleeves during busy hours. He occasionally donned a green eyeshade which made him look like a copy-reader. It was only when, the day's work over,

he rolled down his sleeves, straightened his necktie, and put on his very well tailored coat, that he looked in the least the way *The Footlight's* readers pictured its editor as looking. Seen then, quitting the large office-building, it must be admitted that he had the careless assurance of a man who has known something of the world, a man who could be counted on not to tell the waiter to bring his coffee with his dinner.

Nearly all of *The Footlight's* articles, of course, were purchased from outside contributors. Of these, the articles signed by Lawrence Ballard Flint, appearing every month, were perhaps the cleverest, the most sophisticated. Mr. Flint was a sort of Man About Town. He attended the first nights at the theaters; he went to the Authors' League banquet, the exhibition of Independent Artists, to professional teas and the big prize-fight. His department in *The Footlight* was an informal chat about all these events, about whom he had seen, what he thought of the new Barrie play or the new Impressionist painter, clever bits that he had said to John Parrymore or that Mary Pickford had said to him. It was a department that made school-teachers in Topeka, Kansas, and bank-clerks in Dallas, Texas, feel that they were keeping in touch with all that was newest and best in art and snappiest in metropolitan gossip.

MOST of Lawrence Ballard Flint's readers pictured him a sophisticated, pleasantly cynical *bon vivant*. As a matter of fact, until two months ago the real Lawrence Ballard Flint had been a meek, nervous little hack writer whose real name was Sam Smith. He looked like a cartoon of the Common People. He wrote his first draft by hand and chewed the end of his pencil; but his articles, when laboriously finished and typed, were as easy reading, as clever, as any to be bought in New York.

He loathed writing them, however, and when, in a wilder plot than he could have countenanced in a fiction story, he became the amazed legatee of a wealthy unknown relative, he pushed his battered typewriter out of the sixth-story window of his room at the Y. M. C. A. in his life's one dramatic gesture. Lockwood then suggested that Janice take over Lawrence Ballard Flint's department.

Janice, who up to now had been doing mostly editing and rewriting, was appalled.

"Oh, I couldn't!" she gasped.

"Of course you could. You've taken hold wonderfully well. You can write, and you know the kind of thing our readers like."

"Oh, I couldn't!"

Lockwood smiled quizzically.

"That's what I thought," he observed, "when the political editor of the *Tribune-Dispatch* died and I was ordered to Chicago on a half-hour's notice to cover a national convention."

"But I'm not a real New Yorker; Mr. Smith had lived here all his life—"

"The best New York news-letter is written by a man who came here a few years ago from Cincinnati."

"But I don't know any of those famous people that Mr. Smith talked to—"

"I fancy Sam wasn't very clubby with them all. You know most of them by sight, don't you?"

"Why, yes, a good many of them. But I couldn't talk to them; they wouldn't say clever things to me."

"Make 'em up," was the editor's laconic suggestion. "You can write good snappy conversation."

"Make them up—out of whole cloth? What if the people I said said them should see the articles?"

"I'll take the responsibility of any actor who kicks on having a clever remark quoted in print just because he didn't say it," he assured her, smiling quizzically.

So, with fear and trembling, a new Lawrence Ballard Flint, who stood five feet two in her silk stockings and had a fluff of wavy hair as palely gold as winter sunshine, took up the department. And it was amazingly easy. Once Janice had passed the frightening shock of surprise, it was interesting to try to mimic the cynical, masculine style which had come so incongruously from the meek Sam Smith. The editor had grinned appreciatively over her first attempt.

"Good stuff!" he declared. "Don't be afraid to make it snappy. You never forget you're a gentleman, of course, but you're a devil of a fellow just the same."

And any fearful inhibitions Janice may have had vanished in the genial warmth of appreciation and encouragement. Her second month's contribution Lockwood declared to be fully as good as anything Lawrence Ballard had ever done.

Now, it was not by accident that Janice had not told Bob of her new work. She had decided to wait till she had made good. Then she'd tell him. In case she failed, she would rather Bob did not know about it at all. Bob believed in success and successful people; he had little sympathy for failures.

This particular Sunday afternoon, about the time she had decided it would be safe to tell him, in the first flash of her inspiration, Janice was more than grateful for having kept her own counsel. As she came into her living-room, drawing on a pair of very white gloves, Bob looked up from the advance copy of *The Footlight*.

"Know this fellow Flint?" he inquired.

Janice's mouth twitched roguishly.

"Fairly well," she said, intending to see what he had to say before she told her secret.

"Nice chap?"

Janice hesitated a moment, the dimple just at the corner of her lips growing deeper.

"He's very attractive," she said.

Bob gave a man-of-the-world nod of assent.

"He writes darned entertaining stuff," he admitted, laying down *The Footlight*. "All ready?"

Janice nodded. Suddenly, Bob noticed the telltale dimple.

"What's the joke?"

"Oh, I was just thinking about Mr. Flint."

Bob, from merely an interested reader, instantly became a fiancé.

"I shouldn't imagine," he observed after a brief pause, with an air just a little too casual to be convincing, "that a man of that kind would be a particularly wholesome person for a young girl to know very well."

It was right then, listening to Bob's carefully careless warning, that the idea occurred to Janice. At first it was hardly an idea at all—just a dim, floating, nebulous hint of an idea. But it was sufficient to check the laughing explanation she had been about to make. Instead:

"Well, I'm not likely to have the chance to know whether it would be wholesome or not," she admitted. "A man who pals around with actresses and society queens isn't likely to know a mere assistant editor especially well."

If Bob hadn't admitted the truth of this so promptly, had not seemed to consider it such a reasonable assumption, Janice's idea might never have taken definite shape. Its prompt formation was further helped by Bob's careless remark that he was going to knock off work the next afternoon to go out for luncheon and golf with Bert Pertwee, Bea's brother.

"Bert's an influential young fellow," Bob explained confidentially, "and he seems to have taken rather a shine to me. It doesn't do any harm to broaden out your acquaintance a little along the right lines, you know."

Janice nodded agreement absently, her mind already absorbed in her plan.

THE very next afternoon, while Bob was lunching with the Pertwees, Janice stopped at a stationer's on her way to the office and had a calling-card plate made for Mr. Lawrence Ballard Flint. The stationer was a fashionable one, and he assured Janice that the size and style of engraving she finally chose were a shade newer and smarter than those of Bob's card, which she had brought as a model. This was premeditation; what she did next was founded wholly on a lucky accident.

She was taking Bob to the theater that evening on a pair of Lawrence Ballard Flint passes, with the mere explanation, of course, that she had gotten them from *The Footlight*. He was waiting for her in the living-room when the telephone rang; and Janice, in her own room, adjusting a new hat carefully, called:

"Mind answering it, Bobby? It's probably for Betty."

"No, it's for you," Bob called a moment later.

The call was from the box-office of the theater where they were going. There had been a mistake in the passes that had been sent; the correct ones would be held for her. It was the fact that the masculine voice on the other end of the wire was pleasant, coupled with the fact that Bob had heard it asking for her, which made the lucky accident. Janice had a bright idea. Her answers had consisted of such noncommittal remarks as: "Yes, this is Miss Kendall. . . . Yes. . . . Oh, all right."

Now, the telephone was in the living-room; Bob, pretending to read the paper, could not avoid overhearing half the conversation. Janice's back was to him, and so when the speaker at the other end hung up, Bob could not see her push down the receiver bracket and continue to talk into the dead instrument.



"I can't let myself be dictated to in this high-handed way, you know, Bob."

"Oh, quite all right, thank you," she said pleasantly. A little pause, and she laughed lightly as though parrying some joking, chivalrous pleasantry. Another pause: "The opening night, you mean? Oh, yes, I'd simply love to! Yes, I know you do. Thank you—it's awfully nice of you to put it that way." A brief silence. "What time is the curtain? Why, then, about eight o'clock, I should think. . . . Thank you—good night."

Janice turned from the telephone, casual but quite the docile fiancée. "You don't mind my going to the theater with Mr. Flint, do you, Bob?"

There was only one thing for a modern New York fiancé to say, and of course Bob said it. Thus began the rivalry with Mr. Lawrence Ballard Flint.

On the way home from the theater—it was hot, and they drove through the Park, the long way—Bob showed for the first time a keen interest in Janice's office-work. He asked how many people wrote for *The Footlight*, inquired about Doris McFee, a contributor whose name he happened to recall. Janice told him an amusing little incident about a press-agent. Then, carefully concealed in this wilderness of subtleties, Bob asked:

"What's Flint like? A young fellow?"

"Oh, somewhere around thirty, I should imagine."

"What does he look like?"

Janice was not prepared for this, and so she hastily described David Lockwood, the only person she ever associated with *The Footlight*.

"Why, he's tall and dark and slim and rather distinguished-looking. He has the nicest smile—it tips up a little at one side."

Bob dropped the subject promptly. Lawrence Ballard Flint's smile did not apparently interest him at all.

Janice dropped the subject too. She was enough of an artist not to overdo it. She did not cause Lawrence Ballard's reappearance for nearly a week, and then not by premeditation. He appeared in answer to a sudden need. Thursday evening Bob announced that Bert had invited him out to the Pertwee country place over the week-end.

"I'm going to get him to have his mother ask you too," Bob said. "They've got a peach of a place, wonderful beach, good courts and everything."

Janice recalled Bea Pertwee's indifferent, "Hope I'll see you again some time," her cool self-assurance, the insolence of her eyes, and felt a great wave of distaste for the suggested week-end.

"No, don't, Bob, please. You go along by yourself. I'd rather not. They don't care anything about me, and I don't like them. They'd just be asking me in order to have you, and I'd rather not."

"Nonsense! Of course they like you. They'll be tickled to have you. And you ought to like them. They're the kind of people we ought to be getting acquainted with. Don't be silly and sensitive."

Bob's tone was his most masterful, the one Janice loved; but so pronounced was her distaste for the proposed outing that for the first time the tone failed to move her.

"No, honestly, I'd hate it—I can't bear to be dragged in."

"You wouldn't be dragged in, I tell you. Bert just asked me offhand; very likely his mother'll think of asking you, anyway. Of course they want you."

The memory of Bea's insolent eyes steeled Janice.

"I can't go, anyway," she said with desperate stubbornness. "I have an engagement for Saturday evening. I'm—I'm going to the theater again with Mr. Flint."

Instantly this presented the matter in a new light. Bob forgot the Pertwees.

"I thought we had a standing date for Saturday night," he objected.

"Well, I knew you wouldn't mind, and—so it's all right. You go on out to the Pertwees, and—"

"I don't want to go out to the Pertwees without you. We always have our week-ends together. Can't you get out of the theater? Tell Flint you'd forgotten a previous date."

Janice hesitated for just the right suggestion of yielding uncertainty.

"Come on," Bob coaxed. "Come on and break it. We won't



She wondered if he could hear the words above the amazing thundering of her heart.

go to the Pertwees. I don't care anything about going. I'll fix it with Bert and we'll do something Saturday night and drive out to Sleepy Hollow for dinner Sunday. Come on; you can get out of your Saturday engagement, can't you?"

After a little more coaxing, Janice promised to try. And so exultant was Bob when she finally told him, the next evening, that she had succeeded, so unusually loverlike was he during their Sunday outing, that Janice felt with a little thrill of power that the ancient trick would succeed once again.

NOW, this was all very gratifying, and so far as it went, quite successful. But it had not gone anywhere near far enough. It was, in fact, only a beginning. From this point on, the rivalry of Lawrence Ballard Flint should progress; each week he should be a little more real, a little more imminent, a bit more of a rival. It should, of course, be a progress tempered with discretion, carefully calculated always to be stimulating, never quite antagonizing. There would be no point in actually quarreling with a flesh-and-blood Bob over a ghostly Mr. Flint.

But undeniably there should be progress. Each week the unseen, vivid presence of Lawrence Ballard should make Bob a little less sure of his own position, a bit more on his toes. That was the way it worked in stories. There would probably be a climax sometime when Bob, at last aroused and beside himself with jealous fears, should call back all the fire and ardor of his early courtship to out-court his rival. Then Janice, secure in this new fervor, might consent to ending it all, to putting Lawrence Ballard Flint out of her life forever. This is the way it should have worked, but—it didn't seem to work that way.

After the first few spurts there was so little progress one might almost say there was no progress at all. Bob, instead of becoming increasingly concerned over his rival, seemed after this one incident to be scarcely concerned at all. He received with apparent indifference Janice's frequent announcements that she was going to the theater with Mr. Flint. It almost appeared that he was rather pleased at each occasion. It was evident that he considered an invitation from a man on intimate terms with stage beauties to be flattering to Janice, and thus indirectly flattering to himself—flattering but not apparently alarming. This was not at all as it should be.

Janice took to quoting Lawrence Ballard with careless frequency. This would not have been so easy if it had not been for the editor of *The Footlight*. But during slack half-hours in the office she and Lockwood leaned back in their swivel chairs and talked of cabbages and kings. She learned all about Yale, for instance—Lockwood, as a college correspondent, had worked his way through; so Janice was able to mention casually Mr. Flint's college days and add a few realistic touches. Then Lockwood had gone on a journalistic vagabonding which had lasted five years and taken him all over the world. His *Footlight* job was, in fact, merely one lap in it. He told Janice of Englishmen who were not dense, of Germans who were not brutal. So out of his experience, his skepticism and kindly tolerance, Janice, whose longest journey had been from Farwell to New York, was able to make Mr. Flint something of a man of the world. She quoted his opinions on Irish politics and Parisian revues with equal ease.

Bob was more or less impressed, but evidently with Flint as a man, not as a rival. As a rival, Bob did not seem much excited over Flint. This Janice knew must be due to error somewhere in her technic.

It seemed to her, too, that Bob's attitude toward her was steadily growing less loverlike, more matter-of-fact. When she quoted Flint, as she frequently did, on some subject which seemed amusing or colorful or interesting enough to justify bringing it into the conversation, Bob never encouraged any further discussion. Janice, however, could not attribute this to any flattering pique on Bob's part at the mention of Mr. Flint's name. It was always, rather, that the subject did not seem to interest or amuse Bob. After a perfunctory attention, he would drop it promptly and go on talking about real estate or golf or some of the new people they met at his aunt's, usually in connection with their game of golf or the likelihood of their buying real estate.

Somehow, there was something lacking (Continued on page 111)

The Winning Hand

*The story of a hard
gambler desperate on
the brink of hazard.*

By
John
Russell

Illustrated by
Gayle Hoskins

TENNISON was a gambler. When a coral reef pared the keel plate off the *Evelyn Bird* and she sank in three minutes somewhere near the Howick Isles one rough black night, he preferred to lay his own private bet on a chicken-coop. The *Evelyn's* boats were few and old, and the *Evelyn's* people were hurried, and together they disappeared in the dark and the smother like things sponged from a slate. But the chicken-coop came ashore right side with care.

Tennison was a gambler. He sat up on the little naked islet to which he had been tossed, and like a last player left lonely by the departed crowd, he watched a new day dawn over an expanse swept clean as green baize, where the sun showed in the semblance of a great yellow poker-chip. Perhaps it was just as well for Tennison then that he had been a gambler through all weathers, trained to his own self-sufficient philosophy.

"It looks like a tough layout," he observed with his grim drawl. "But I got my shirt left: and I got license to draw my breath."

Such was his first comment. Considering the circumstances, considering the extent of his recent loss, rather a remarkable comment, too!

At midnight aboard the *Evelyn* the proximate outlook for Mr. Tennison had been bright and rosy. Five short hours before, in the exercise of his profession, Mr. Tennison had had his clutches on a fortune. He had staged a little flutter with a promising subject—the wildish son of a millionaire shipowner and acting purser in charge of the *Evelyn's* strong-room. He had brought about the said flutter by cautious approaches during their leisurely coasting cruise. He had seen the stakes at last run high enough, the whisky far enough and the cards well enough to justify the most positive expectations.

To be precise: with everybody else raised out of the pot, some

Just then he saw a hand extended under the water—a weak hand offered as with the grasp of friendship to pull him through.

twenty-five hundred pounds in sight and young Fraley Bird facing him alone over the littered board,—an unnerved candidate, ripe for tapping.—Tennison had just filled his hand on a one-card draw at the very instant the ship struck!

These are the coincidences, the tricks and fantasies, that seem to leave for Fate no image but a grinning devil. How else account for the studied malignance of misfortune? Apparently the sole purpose of this wreck, with its terror and its tragedy and its violent intervention in so many schemes and hopes and lives of men, had been to deprive a needy adventurer of his legitimate winnings.



He considered sea and sky, now quite innocent and flawless; the bare, purple ridges, the thin streaks of sand, the raffle of broken, useless wreckage and rotting seaweed—the whole irritating complacency of physical detail that succeeds a catastrophe.

"You certainly did," he admitted to things at large, personal or impersonal as might be, "you certainly did put me over the jumps. But I saved myself a seat. You aint beat me—damn you! You aint beat me yet!"

It was the spirit of a man who never had flinched from the hostility of events; and having so far reasserted his defiance, which was also his pride, he cast back over the late affair.

THEY had been four at table: two chance-met passengers of the coast, with young Fraley Bird and Tennison himself. They had played soberly at first—and then not so soberly. Fraley's inside cabin on the *Evelyn*, office and quarters combined—with its pair of iron doors opening directly forward into the ship's little strong-room—had seemed as cozy and secure as any back parlor on land. Under its lights, hazed with companionable smoke, between its stout bulkheads and worn, yellowed naval furniture of berth and locker, they were as safely guarded as voyagers well could be. Rattling rain and spray on the skylight, heave and tilt of the vessel, a quiver now and then as her screw flipped up in a heavy sea—such intimations of outer storm merely heightened their zest, further stimulated by sundry tall drinks and betting progressively taller, until they came naturally to the stage of moist eye and loose tongue, the harvest-time for wary workers.

"I'm away!" announced McMurtrie, a gross, cheerful soul with a head like a tanned lard-bladder. "I take cover," he said, rapping for a pass. "Blast this pair o' mine! I aint 'elped 'em once tonight, and I wont stand a raise on 'em now—not in no table-stake game. For Gor's sake, Mr. Bird, sir—pass that bottle, will you? Per'aps there's a drop o' luck left somewhere."

Fraley sat next to him, opposite Tennison, where his handsome, boyish face was framed against the rectangle of the strong-room doors. With the least involuntary start he lifted his eyes from the hand at which he had been staring.

"What d'you say, McMurtrie? Luck?" he echoed, and laughed in the nervous note that ran through their talk like the tinkle of a triangle. "I don't believe so, but we'll see."

Carefully he edged his cards, anchored them under a sovereign, then caught up the bottle and shook it. There might have been a third of the contents left, but he slung it aside to the padded couch and slid out of his seat.

"Just wait a second, wont you?"

Now, there was nothing actually irregular in the fact that he had left the *Evelyn's* strong-room standing open. On her coastal run of some thousands of miles between horn and horn of the Australian continent, from Wyndham clear around to Port Kennedy, she did some occasional carrying of special, valuable cargo. But this trip she had landed her last insured packages at Broadmount and her last mail-bags at Cooktown, and she would take no more shipments before Thursday Island.

Officially speaking, that strong-room was empty—just a steel-walled cubicle, six by four by eight feet high. Unofficially, of course, the officer in charge was free to use it for his own casual purposes as he might see fit—and so he did use it. By an amiable whim, as appeared, he kept his private stock there.

DURING the evening Fraley had thrice gone rummaging inside. Three times he had issued with fresh supplies of good cheer. And this time again he played the generous host. The squeak of a corkscrew, the *plop* of a cork, and presently he returned—amiable as ever. Nobody made any remark. Nobody took any particular notice—nobody, that is to say, except the watchful Mr. Tennison, who noticed everything by system, who glimpsed in this interval, as he had in each preceding interval, the gleam of a red-lacquered cash-box slipped swiftly from its slot in the wall-safe and the gesture of furtive, nimble, thievish fingers.

"Try that, Mac." Fraley set out the new flask with a flourish. "Much good it'll do you!" he added.

"Ow do you mean, Mr. Bird?"

"Well, they say there's never any help for the wicked," giggled Fraley, in the comic vein of whisky-and-soda. He sucked at a cigarette, resumed his cards and ran them over again, snapped them on his thumbnail—reached under his unbuttoned waistcoat to the money-belt, from which, as from a Fortunatus' purse, he had drawn inexhaustibly throughout their session, selected a sheaf of crinkly fresh notes and slapped it before him on the

table. All quite coolly enough, with the ready recklessness of a rich man's son on a spree. If he was a trifle too reckless, if his swagger showed strain, the accurate readings were left for the only observer who held the clue.

"And that's why," he went on, "I'm going to see Mr. Tennison's raise—and raise him to the roof!"

In the silence that fell, the fourth player stalled a bit. This was a sun-dried nondescript whose magnificent opal pin served at once to define and to advertise him—some nabob from the Lightning Ridge fields.

"Eh? Eh?" he clucked. "How much?"

"Five hundred quid."

The nondescript abandoned all holds like a startled crab, with the hasty intimation that that knocked the smoke out of him!

So the bet was up to Tennison once more.

He had no compunction in what he was about to do. As for himself, he was an absolutely seasoned loser, of a rigid rectitude by his lights—one of those men kept hard and clean as flints by the world's rough edges. Under forty, lithe and vigorous, —fiercely and indomitably independent,—he followed life like a huntsman who stalks a dangerous quarry with a single-shot rifle. As a prospector in Mexico, as a timber-cruiser in the Northwest and a beach-combing speculator through the Islands,—at copra, faro, shell and shell-games, future contracts and past performances,—many a play he had made in his day: always he had tried for the big killing, and always he had missed. Such men are known and recognized in the profession. They are the square gamblers who remain Jonah gamblers for themselves.

The crash of a Westralian guano-company some months earlier had left him where he had been so often before—on his uppers; and business had been very poor indeed, until he discovered a happy dispensation of Providence evidently designed to meet such cases. There exists a curious delusion in the British mind, on which the sun never sets, that it utterly understands the gentle pastime of poker. Tennison had improved this helpful error,—which largely corrects the percentage tables of the late lamented Hoyle,—the while he saved up for another crack at Destiny. And Destiny had relented so far as to offer him a broadside target, it seemed, with this very trip on the *Evelyn*.

THE day he left Sydney a certain local acquaintance—an exile of his own tribe and a genial pest—came down to Darling Harbor to see him off, incidentally to scoff a little at Tennison's latest lead in Queensland gold-mines.

"Going up among the big bananas to hunt for gold!" exclaimed this individual as they stood together by the vessel's upper rail, commanding all the stir of departure below them. "It sounds blame' old-fashioned, Tenn. They tell me Queensland's been promoted to death, anyhow."

"This is a sure thing," said Tennison—whereat his friend smiled a smile. But Tenn nodded solemnly.

"Yes, and it did ought to be sure, too," he affirmed. "I got a big bonanza up there, the break of a lifetime. The only trouble, I'm so short of dough. I tell you for a fact, capital's all I need. If I had four figures to shoot with, I couldn't lose."

"Capital?" the other repeated. His roving glance over the crowded wharf took the twinkle of the incorrigible gossip. "Look here a minute. Tenn—lemme show you something. Capital, d'you say? Just cast your glim over yonder. Pipe that frosty old chap beside the gangplank—the little nob in the tight black coat, talking to that flash youngster in purser's uniform. Get 'em?"

Tenn looked. He saw the youngster, who struck him as chiefly young, lanky and ill' at ease. And apart from the throng he saw a rugged, white-haired little figure—a striking figure, he thought, the picture of a pioneer autocrat, but saddened like an old granite rock, scarred with sorrows.

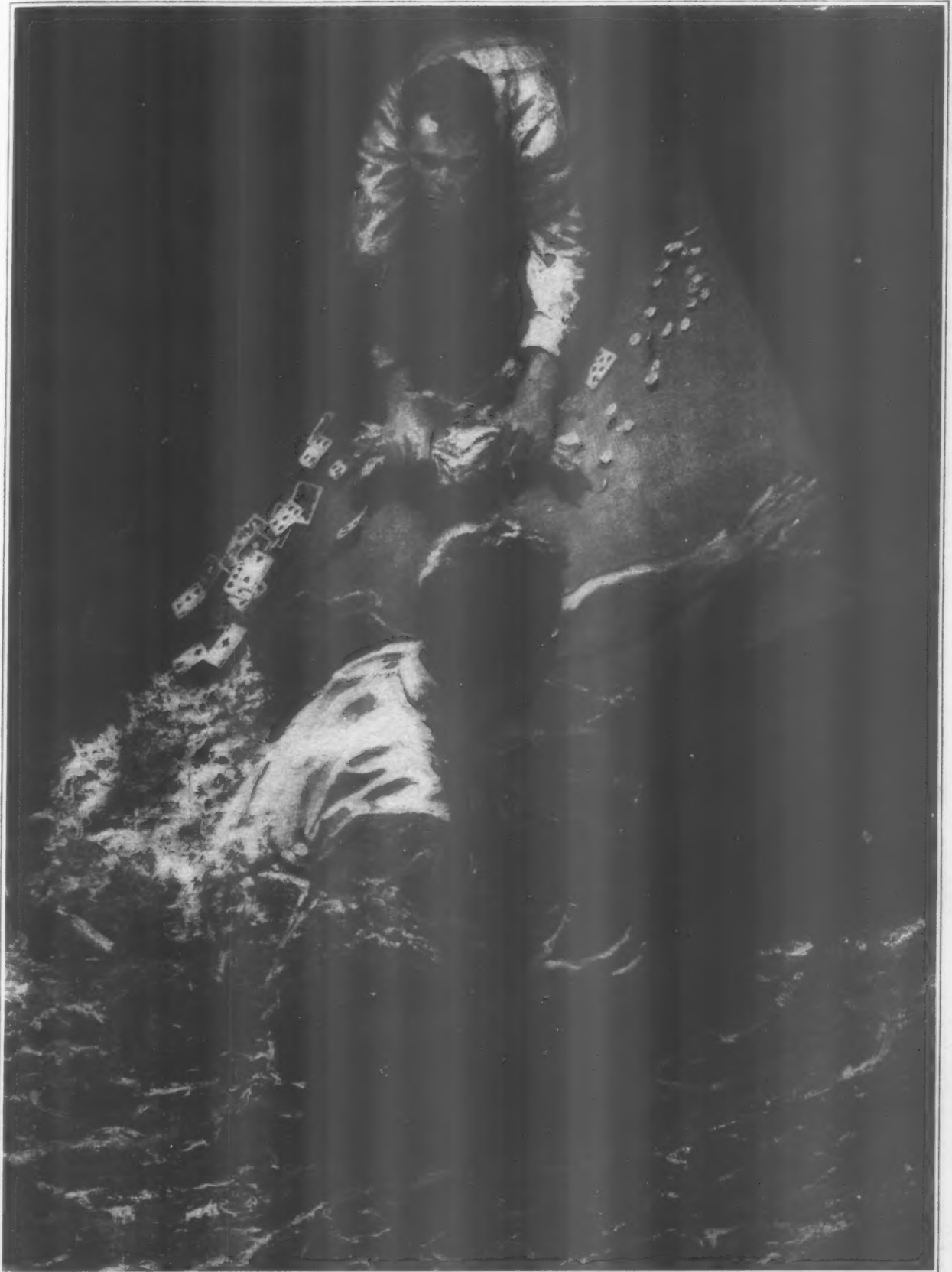
"That's Matthew Bird—the richest shipowner in this country! He's got this tub and plenty more, making his millions. And the kid's his no-good son, Fraley. Tenn, there's your capital for you!"

"Which way?"

"Why, the young guy's sailing along with you this trip, I understand. It's all the talk up Bridge Street—and he's dressed to the part sure enough. Mean to say you never heard o' Fraley Bird?"

"No," said Tennison.

"He's a no-good kid—soft as suet. Everybody knows it except his father. I guess he knows too, only he wont believe it. Common story, eh? But wait; it seems this gay young bloke went shy on the firm—all the same as embezzled. He ought to be in jail right now. Best if he was."



Tennison had a glimpse of the only one who managed to stand his ground—Fraley Bird, clutching madly at the heap of bank-notes.

"Huh! How much did he nick?"

"Seven-fifty."

Tennison's lip tightened. "Fiker! Why, that's just the size of my own measly pile. Can this be a hunch? What more about papa's darling?"

"Well, the son of Matthew Bird don't go to prison, you can bet—else where's the good of coin? Likely it comes hard on the old man, but he just buys the case off and hands the kid his own sentence. Honor of the family. Grand old name of Bird. Awful disgrace, and all such. 'You take a job and square yourself,' he says. 'You get busy and clear that seven-fifty somehow,' he says, 'or you're an orphan with no home address!' And here's young Fraley setting out in the wide, wide world, Tenn. Meat!"

"On a purser's salary?"

"Ah-ha! But don't forget the ship's cash, ol' sport! There's always heaps of money being forwarded on these vessels—and Fraley, he's in charge. That's how he's going to prove his blooming honesty. Hey? What better gold mine do you want?"

In truth Tennison wanted nothing better, and when the promise had developed—when he found himself sitting behind Fraley's raise loaded for bear, with three big aces in his mitt, he unlimbered. He already had a close notion of the cards the other was holding. If he could shake his nerve a bit further, it would amount to a dead certainty.

"No help for the wicked—is that your opinion, Mr. Bird, sir?" he drawled. "You never said a truer word. Gents, a fact you may have tumbled to about this luck stuff—it don't come on demand."

He began counting off bills from his own stack.

"You take a guy when he's come to a finish," he continued steadily, "—some crooked trustee, or a grafting clerk, we'll say, who's due to settle up. Take any man when he's plumb got to have luck or go under. Does he ever connect with the hand to pull him through? Does he ever cash the bet that saves him? What do you think, Mr. Bird? Does it ever happen? That's the question."

Fraley had flushed painfully, then paled.

"I suppose," he returned, low-voiced, with a feeble attempt at lightness, "I suppose he can pray for it—perhaps."

"Pray!" Tenn regarded him with a gaze as chill as glacial depths. "Well, son, you want to begin quick—because I'm bumping you another five hundred!"

The nondescript whistled, and McMurtrie swore appreciatively. They felt the thrill of a crisis, but to them this talk was all on the surface—conversational barrage laid down to cover a sharp collision. They did not observe Fraley as Tenn observed him, or note as he noted, the flickering eyelid and the twitching wrist with which young Bird brought himself to answer:

"Five hundred on top of that!"

Mac chuckled. "Maybe you'll require to put up a prayer yourself, Tennison, ol' dear."

"No," said Tenn. Calmly he formulated his net wisdom. "No; I never played her that-away, and I never will. One cinch, according to my dope: there's nothing nor nobody waiting around to give you a boost. Any good luck you find in this show, you got to make it against the odds. And if you need it too bad, you don't make it at all. Once more, Mr. Bird—going up!"

The youngster's stare fell miserably. He shuffled his hand—wavered; and finally with dread and anxiety all too evident, all too revealing, he did exactly what Tenn had been expecting to see him do—conned it over again for the third time.

"I'll meet that raise!" he decided in a gasp. "And g-give me one card," he added to McMurtrie.

"Same for me," said Tennison.

They drew; Tenn discovered that he had caught another jack to the kicker behind his three aces.

"I'm in for all I've got." He thrust his last remaining bills to the center. Counting his velvet, he had ventured every penny he possessed in the world. "Table stakes for a call!"

Fraley, on his part, was afraid to look.

After all, he was only a boy. While he sat with the unseen card under his shaking fingers, the thump of the screw must have measured each thick heartbeat for him; through the yellow haze of the electric lights he must have had a vision of guilt and fear easily imagined—as easily as the boy's story of fool mistakes which had



"Well, well, another deal, huh?"

brought him to this pass. He was paying for some of them in his instant of agony. He had forgotten his swagger. His lip sagged with the burnt-out cigarette. Sweat-curls stood at his temples. To lose now, meant the smash of everything for him. To win—whatever lesser flaws a moralist might have picked in the title—to win meant definite release, return of the stolen funds, his name saved, his record cleared.

Meanwhile no twist of that ordeal escaped the keen vision of Mr. Tennison; and no ethical consideration troubled his serene soul; he simply waited to collect. Being the type he was, of no adversary could he have been more scornful. He knew this rich man's son for a weakling, for a timorous crook who dabbled at crime like a pickpocket, for a pampered waster who had made a wretched mess of life and who sought to dodge the consequence at others' expense. By his standard here was rightful prey within the risks of the game. The game had never showed him mercy. Short of an impossibility, he did not believe that Fraley or anybody like Fraley could have a chance.

But the impossibility happened.

Just as young Bird fumbled at his cards and from his cards to his money-belt, just as they were all tensely aware that he was going to try the issue—just then the cabin rose with them, swung and hung giddily. It was the effect of an earthquake, very still, very deliberate—and appalling, completely. It had



"I'll buy!" He began to strip off the few soggy garments left him.

the same psychic recoil. They met it on their feet, but when the ship seemed to buckle and to check like a creature stricken in mid-leap, when all solid things that bounded them seemed ready to dissolve, the belated clap of panic shook them apart like mice in a cracker-box.

How Mac and the nondescript got away, Tennison never knew—probably they never knew themselves. In his own next conscious wink he had gone asprawl on the after bulkhead. He looked uphill toward the strong-room doors. And in the dying glow of the bulbs he had a final glimpse of the only one of their four who had managed to stand his ground. Fraley Bird was that one—Fraley Bird, pitiful, unforgettable, propped over the board on both arms, clutching madly at the heap of bank-notes, with the face and the gesture of despair.

Tenn would have scrambled after him, but the darkness dropped between; he would have blocked the exit against him, but a rush of water came; and though he lingered and groped to the last endurable moment, it was useless: presently he had all he could do to reach the deck—the flurry, the uproar, the black confusion and at length the timely chicken-coop of a most untimely disaster.

THIS was the score to date; this was the freeze-out which the solitary survivor had to contemplate when he roused on his rocky perch somewhere near the Howick Group that early

dawn. He did contemplate it. He took a sort of satisfaction in confirming the savage, incredible humor of it. Only after he had run it through, only after he had tasted the ultimate drop of philosophic bitterness, was he minded at all to bestir himself in the premises.

He rose for a survey round about: and there, on the other side of the islet, over which he must have washed in the night,—neatly cradled with her masts and funnel aslant and her fo'c'stle laved by the creaming swell, silent and deserted,—there lay the wreck of the *Evelyn Bird*!

It has been recorded that Tennison was a gambler. He gave a demonstration worth watching at that minute. He neither danced nor shouted; with the balance against every cast, win or lose,—which was his pose, perhaps, but also his trade- and his character-mark,—he merely surveyed the new prospect, its startling shift, its swift reversal. "Well, well," he drawled. "Well, well, another deal, huh? Another spin for my money! I'll buy!" He began to strip off the few soggy garments left him. "I said I wasn't beat yet!" he remarked as grimly as ever.

And as grimly and defiantly as he had ever bucked any gamble anywhere, he stood ready for action on board the sunken *Evelyn* a little later.

Not that the thing seemed so very difficult. The vessel had slipped from the reef like a victim from the point of an assassin's

sword; she was bedded now like the same victim in a wayside ditch—easy picking. Her deckhouse served him for a break-water, the drum of her donkey engine for a ladder and a diving rest. And as if nothing should lack, hurried haulage at the boats and rafts had burst the little skylight just forward on the lower deck, that particular skylight which covered the purser's quarters. Tennison located it almost at once—a gaping square well several feet under where the sun struck in with golden sheen.

Again he had no doubts about his play. This wreck owed him his winning: a glorious winning, with all it should bring him, success, the Queensland mine, a potential million, as he had reason to hope—the break of a lifetime, as he had told his Sydney friend. He meant to get it, or the value of it, while it was there for the taking, before the arrival of some inevitable, officious rescue-party that might, indeed, dispute his right. One way or another, he meant to get it back. It was his. Strictly and justly it was his, by virtue of the winning hand. Three aces and a pair!

He poised for an instant, compact, hard-jawed, clean-limbed in the light of the morning, then launched himself with an arching spring for the salvage of twenty-five hundred pounds.

His plunge took him deep into the cabin and around on a quick curve over the table-top. The table itself, firmly bolted down, offered like a ledge in a cave where he could grip; through the sting and film against his sight the whole place had an appearance curiously cavelike. Above him a flight of tiny fish steered to and fro; trailing lengths of cordage through the hatch swayed in the swirl of his passage; ripples of shadow writhed and faded strangely in the deeper shadow. Already the sea had invaded; already it had converted this grotto to its own hidden use, as if for ages its mysteries had been in preparation here. Tennison paused. That is to say, he paused long enough to make sure no stray sovereigns were lying about. Whereupon he caught a toe-hold on the edge and shot ahead between the doors of the strong-room.

He passed into greenish dusk—a mere dispersed phosphorescence guided him to his next goal, the interior wall-safe at the far side. He made it smartly, and staying himself by the knobs, sought the right-hand slot. In his fist he carried a short-bladed jackknife, his only weapon, which he had brought along for forcing that slot if need should be. But it was open—it still stood open as his late adversary had left it. Deliberately he pulled out the red-lacquered cash-box, lifted the lid, reached inside and searched. The box was empty.

He turned to rise—and met Fraley Bird.

NO mistaking the apparition that floated so quietly beside him, no mistaking the lanky form, the pallid, boyish features. Fraley Bird himself—the weakling and waster who had been trapped in his last frantic effort, who had had the nerve to stay and to pay the whole price, after all. His drowned face had slipped back of evil knowledge, back of terror and desperation, to the innocence of childhood—such innocence as a rugged old martinet of a father must have treasured in memory. His manner was calm enough now in the dignity of youth and of death, never to be strained again by guilt, by falsehood, by folly. His sightless eyes looked into Tennison's with level regard, with unfathomable scrutiny as the gambler closed in and grappled him.

For Tennison did just that, straightaway—unhesitating, undeterred by qualms or scruples whatever. He knew why Fraley had died, for the settling of what account. And it made no least difference. He was not even concerned to marvel at the strange encounter, or to wonder how the body came to be drifting so low, with a singular and inexplicable motion. He was concerned about nothing except his winning. He went after it—simply. The other had tried to get it away from him. His turn had come to get it away from the other. Without fear as he was without belief, without pity as he was without reproach, he tackled the dead boy and wrestled with him for that money-belt wherein—as in a Fortunatus' purse—the unhappy defaulter had kept his wealth.

He found the belt; he found it fat and heavy to the touch; he drew it clear, with a strong thrust spurned the body contemptuously from him toward the outer cabin, and popped for the surface.

Under the ceiling of the strong-room, the pressure of prisoned air set his head to spinning a bit. But he was conscious of no other reaction. With the prize actually won, he might have indulged a certain gloat—he might have cheered or grinned or exulted in some measure. Another man might—not Tennison! In his moment of triumph he remained, as his peculiar philosophy

had taught him, single-minded, self-sufficing, sternly assured of his own righteousness and his own adequacy. And all quite properly at that moment. For it was then, while he rested there inside the cool, dark cubicle, breathing deeply and comfortably, while he finished strapping the belt about his waist—it was then that he felt his foot seized from below.

SOMETHING took hold of him—something; he had no notion what, but something tough as leather and elusive as spider webbing fastened upon him and drew him downward with gentle, insinuating force. He leaped away from it through the water in a spasm of all his muscles, in a revolt of outraged flesh. It clung. Instinctively he struck to free himself. His arm, too, became enmeshed. And when he lifted it, he brought up in the green twilight a nest of squirming, dripping tentacles, loathsome adhesive and active! He tried to hurl them off. He could as easily have detached a part of himself. He slashed at them with the knife. They offered no tangible resistance. But they would not loosen.

The cap of the horror was that for minutes he had no name for it, could not place it as reality. He was like a man overtaken by the monstrous fictions of a dream. He seemed to be floundering deeper in a net—an elastic and multiplied net with an unimaginable life to itself. Only when he plucked a chill, resistant mass and with frenetic strength tore it apart like orange pulp, he had some perception that these things were actual creatures; he knew as one dimly knows a more hideous fact through hideous delirium, that he had fallen among the ravening rock-squid of the reef. Them he had disturbed at their dreadful meal. They clustered in their numbers.

Like the sins of a reckoning, like bad thoughts, ill deeds, like all the devils of hate, greed and cruelty made manifest, they swarmed, they weighed upon him, they hung upon him. He sliced a slimy ganglion to ribbons: singly they were no such formidable opponents. But more came, and he was burdened with the money-belt. A snaky cord whipped about his loins, another about his thighs. A foul bracelet circled his other arm. He began to sink.

Cut off as far, as completely by himself as a man could be, he clawed wildly for a hold to buoy him, to bear him up. And there was none. Only the pitiless smooth four walls of the strong-room on which he flung himself, whereon he ripped his nails to the quick. In his terrible need he had no prop. He had no rest, no anchorage. He had nothing to cling to!

He went down. He struggled up again with a cry bubbling to his lips. "Help!"—the first time he had ever asked it. "Help!" he cried. And there was no help.

"Oh, God!"

It was a prayer.

The independent Mr. Tennison, with his defiance and his scorn and his adequacy, had come to a finish. He was due for a settlement. He had been caught in a place where not to lose he had to cash some vastly improbable bet, where not to go under, he had to have sheer luck, which means salvation. And he prayed like any other wretched, frightened, helpless human unit—unconsciously, distractedly, fervently—to anything or anybody at large, personal or impersonal as might be.

If he had had a somewhat better light on the matter, perhaps—perhaps, as later he sometimes tried to convince himself—he might have avoided that curious necessity, which changed all the current of his days.

Just then he saw a hand extended under the water—a weak hand, a limp white hand in a white sleeve. Fraley Bird's! The body he had lightened and thrust so rudely outward had risen inside the purser's cabin, had caught by the crook of an elbow on the lintel of the strong-room door. Its hand was offered to Tennison as with the grasp of friendship to pull him through. He took it. It served for a brace. It served for a point of support by which he could drag himself down through the top of the doorway, to the cabin, to the electric fixtures, to the coaming—and so to the hatch where he came surging out, breathless, half-choked, but still alive to finish his fight on fair terms in the blessed open air and sunshine.

WHEN Tennison came to again from the stupor of exhaustion, he was lying stretched like a rock-dried sprat on a shelf of that same little islet somewhere near the Howick Group. But this time he had plenty of company. He awoke to a hum of voices and a shuffle of feet, and blinked up at a ring of kindly, excited folk gathering around him—blinked with bewilderment as he recognized the (Continued on page 126)

The Settling Of the Sage

Illustrated by
Douglas Duer

The Story So Far:

CALVIN HARRIS rode up to the Three Bar, as the old Warren ranch was called, and there asked for and obtained employment. A little later he sought an interview with "Billie" Warren, mistress of the ranch since the death of her father, Calvin Warren, and told her who he was—her father's namesake, son of his old friend William Harris, for whom she herself had been named.

Calvin Harris, the man she despised! For she believed that the father of the man before her had preyed upon her interests through the sentiment of her parent. Her father's will had stipulated that half of his property should go to the younger Harris under the condition that the man should make his home on the Three Bar for two out of the first three years after her father's decease. The whole of it was to go to him in case she failed to make her own home at the Three Bar during her co-heir's stay, or in the event of her marriage to another during that time.

Harris stayed on at the Three Bar, in a relation of armed neutrality with his co-heir, Billie Warren. He won the respect of the other men—and the enmity of Slade, a neighboring ranchman who paid court to Billie, even while he stole her cattle.

The round-up started with Harris serving as foreman; and he presently had occasion to order away a notorious cattle-rustler named Harper, whom he suspected of being in league with Slade. Later Harris caught one of Billie's men, Morrow,—who, he inferred, was in Slade's pay,—driving off some Three-Bar cattle instead of bringing them in, and discharged him. Shortly thereafter a bullet, fired from ambush by Morrow, hit Harris' saddle. The Three-Bar men pursued. One, a youth named Bangs, failed to return—was found murdered, probably by Harper's men. Afterward old Rile Foster, Bangs' particular friend, disappeared. Presently two of Harper's men were found shot dead, gun in hand.

It was about this time that Billie learned that Calvin Harris' father had willed her half of his own large property, providing she remained at the Three Bar for five years after her father's death. And now Carlos Deane, an attractive young business man whom Billie had met in the East, came to visit at the Three Bar.



"Sho," Harris deprecated, "I'm getting spooky! I thought it was some one else."

By Hal G. Evarts

CHAPTER X

HARRIS had left the ranch an hour before daylight, his ride occasioned by the reports of several of the men. In the last three days each couple that worked the range had found one or more of the new white-face bulls shot down. The evidence, as Harris pieced the scraps together, indicated that a lone rider had made a swift raid, riding for forty miles along the foot of the hills in a single day, shooting down every Three-Bar bull that crossed his trail. A dozen dead animals marked his course. A few more such raids, and the Three-Bar calf-crop would be extremely short the following spring.

The near end of the foray had extended to within ten miles of the home ranch, and Harris had gone out to have a look at some of the nearer victims. He located two by the flights of meat-eating birds; but the footprints of other cattle had blotted out all tracks and made any attempt at trailing impossible. He rode back to the corrals in the early afternoon and joined Billie and Deane.

"Not a track," he said. "We must expect more or less of that. They'll cut in on us whenever there's a chance."

As Harris left them, the girl pointed out a horseman riding up the lane.

"The Sheriff," she volunteered, and Deane noted an odd tightening of her lips.

Alden dismounted and accosted Moore and Horne. From their grinning faces she knew that they were deliberately evading whatever questions the Sheriff might be asking. Horne's voice reached them.

"Whoever it is seems to be doing a right neat job," he said. "Why not let him keep it up?"

The Sheriff came over to Deane and the girl.

"Billie, I expect you can tell me who's doing this killing over in the Breaks," he said.

She was unaccustomed to the easy dissimulation that was second nature to the men of the whole countryside, and her eyes fell under the Sheriff's steady gaze. Deane was looking into her face, and with a shock he realized that she could pronounce the name of the assassin but was deliberately withholding it. She raised her head with a trace of defiance.

"No, I can't tell you," she said.

Deane expected to hear the Sheriff's curt demand that she divulge the name of the man he sought. It must be easily apparent to him, as it was to Deane, that she knew. But Alden only dropped a hand on her shoulder and stood looking down at her.

"All right, girl," he said mildly. "I reckon you can't tell. He can't be such a rotten sort if you refuse to turn him up." He pushed back his hat and smiled at Deane. "We

have to humor the women-folks out here," he explained as he turned toward the bunkhouse.

Deane, already at a loss to grasp the mental attitude of the range-dwellers, was further mystified by a sheriff who spoke of humoring the ladies in a matter pertaining to a double killing.

"Billie, you know!" he accused. "Why wouldn't you tell?"

"Because there's a good chance that he's a friend of mine," she stated simply. "Those men had it coming to them, and somehow I can't feel any regret."

"But if it was justified, he should give himself up and stand trial," he said.

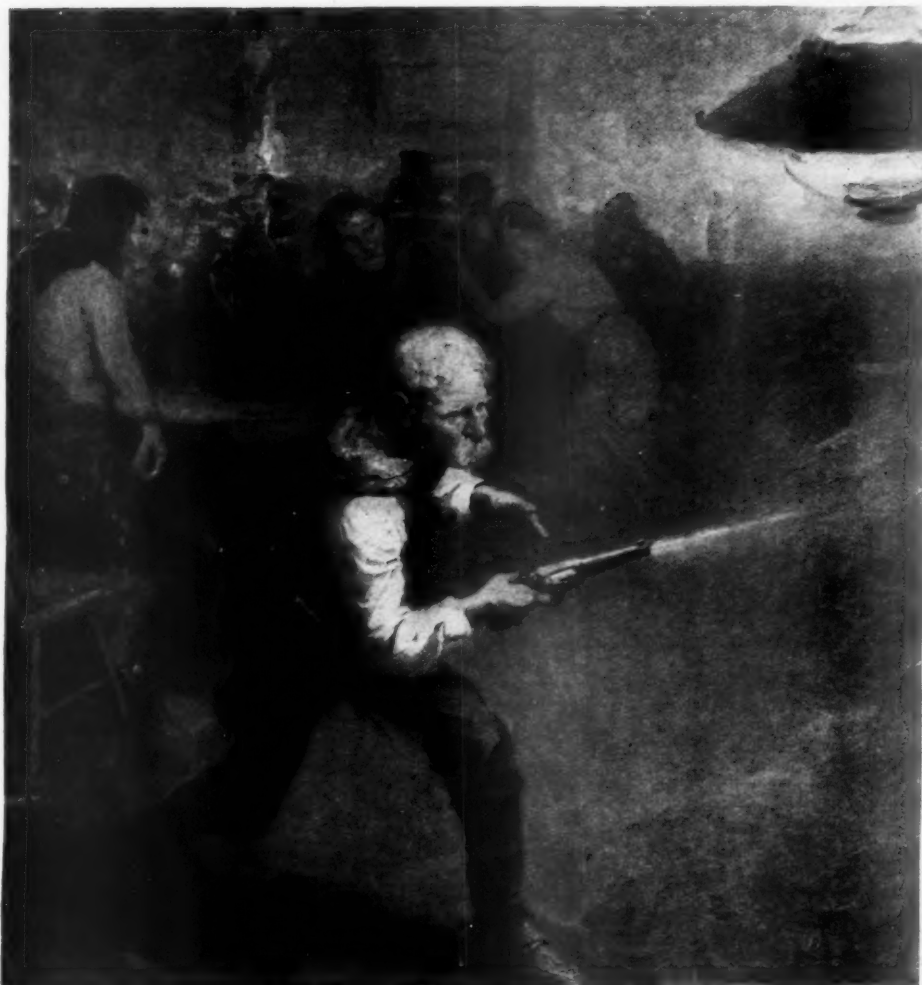
"Then let him do it of his own accord," she said. "I certainly wont." The memory of little Bangs, his adoring gaze fastened on her face, was uppermost in her mind and brought a lump to her throat. "I hope he gets them all."

"Billie, let me take you away from all this," Deane urged again. "Let me give you the things every girl should have—shut all the rough spots out of your path. I want to give you the things every girl needs to round out her life—a home and love and shelter."

Shelter! Slade's words recurred to her: "A soft front lawn to range in."

"This is what I need," she said, and waved an arm in a comprehensive sweep. Two hands, recently arrived, were unpacking before the bunkhouse. A third was shoeing a horse near the blacksmith shop. The mule-teams were plowing in the flats. A line of chaps-clad men roosted like so many crows on the top bar of the corral, mildly interested in the performance of another who twirled a rope in a series of amazing tricks. "That's what I need—all that," she said. "And you're asking me to give it up!"

"But it's not the life for a girl," he insisted.



Rile tossed a boot-heel onto the floor, and as it rolled toward the two men, he shot Canfield

"You've told me a hundred times that I was different from other girls. But now you're wanting me to be like all the rest. Where would the difference be then?" she asked a little wistfully. "Why can't you go on liking me the way I am, instead of making me over?"

But Carlos Deane could not see. It was his last evening alone with her, and after the meal they rode across the hills through the moonlight. In that hour she was very near to doing as he wished. If only he had suggested that she come to him as soon as the Three Bar was once more a prosperous brand, had only pointed out how she could spend months of each year on the old home ranch, he might then have won his point without waiting. But that is not the way of man toward woman. His plea was that she leave all this behind—for him. And his hold was not quite strong enough to induce her to give up every link of the life she had loved for long years before Carlos Deane had even been a part of it.

"I can't tell you now," she said as they rode back to the corrals. "Not now. It would take something out of me—the vital part—if I had to leave the old Three Bar in the shape it's in today. It's sort of like deserting a crippled child."

THE next day her stand was unaltered; and in the evening, when the whole Three-Bar personnel swung to their saddles and headed for the frolic at Brill's, Deane had been unable to gain her promise. His luggage had been sent ahead in a buckboard, for the dance was to be an all-night affair, and he would leave on the morning stage.

There were but few horses at the hitch-rails when they reached the post, but a dozen voices raised in song drifted faintly to their ears and apprised them of the fact that other arrivals



through the chest. Lang's gun crashed almost with his own.

were not far behind. As the Three-Bar girl entered at the head of her men, she saw Bentley and Carpenter leaning against the bar, well toward the rear of the room.

Within the last week she had heard that Carp, after being let off by Harris, had started up a brand of his own down in Slade's range. Harris' remarks about Slade's mode of acquiring new brands recurred to her—that he fostered small outfits for a few seasons, then bought them out. As the men scattered, she commented on this to Harris. The Three-Bar foreman nodded.

"Likely the same old move," he said. "I've been trying to get a line on Carp. He started off with a bill-of-sale from Slade for a hundred head of Three-Bar re-brands. But it didn't come direct from Slade, at that. Morrow engineered the deal. Said he came into the paper for two years' back pay from Slade—last year and the one before—had figured to start up for himself and was to draw his pay in cows. The paper is dated at the time Morrow quit Slade last year. What can we prove wrong with that? Morrow simply sells the paper to Carp. Of course, it's a plant. All Carp has to do is to run Slade's Triangle on the hips of any number of Three-Bar she-stock. Like I told you, there's no way to check Slade up on the number of our re-brands. If Carp gets caught, it's his own hard luck."

A dozen men from the Halfmoon D swarmed in at the door. Mrs. McVey, the owner's wife, stationed herself in one corner with the Three-Bar girl while the men gravitated to the bar.

"I'll take Deane in tow for a while," Harris said, "and get him acquainted with folks." He led Deane to the bar and gave him scraps of the history of various neighbors as they arrived.

Harper's men came in, the albino standing half a head taller than any other on the floor, and they mingled with the rest as if their records were the most immaculate of the lot. Two of

Slade's foremen arrived with their families. The wife of one was lean and bent, worn from years of drudgery. The other was an ample, red-cheeked woman of great self-confidence, her favorite pose that of planting both hands on her hips, elbows outspread, and nodding vigorously to emphasize her speech.

Bart Epperson, a trapper from far back in the hills, had brought his family to the frolic. Mrs. Epperson was a tiny, meek woman who had but little to say. Her two daughters, in their late teens, had glossy black hair, high cheek-bones and a faint olive tinge of skin which betrayed a trace of Indian ancestry.

Lafe Brandon came at the head of his tribe. Ma Brandon, white-haired and motherly and respected by all, was possessed of a queer past known to the whole community. Forty years before, Lafe Brandon had stopped at a sod hut on the Republican and found a girl wife with both eyes discolored from blows of her heavy-handed spouse. Lafe had left the bearded ruffian unconscious, with a broken nose and three fractured ribs, and had ridden off with the girl. Five sons and a daughter had been born to them. Two years before, Kit Brandon, the daughter, had been wed to a merchant in Coldriver. The traveling parson who married them heard of the parents' queer case, learned that Ma Brandon's former mate was long since dead, and spoke earnestly to the pair. Both were willing to do anything which might prove of future benefit to Kit. The conference resulted in the old couple's standing before the parson and having the marriage service performed for them an hour before a like rite was rendered for the daughter.

Harris laughed as he informed Deane of this bit of history.

"They both considered it rather an unnecessary fuss," he said, "and it's rumored that they had their first quarrel of a lifetime on the way home from the service."

Two of the sons were married and living at the home ranch. They came to the dance with the rest of the family, Lou Brandon's wife Dolly, a former dance-hall girl of Coldriver, and Al Brandon's better half Belle, the daughter of a Utah cowman.

An extra stage-load rolled in from Coldriver, and four couples joined the throng.

"Ex-school-teachers," Harris informed. "They marry them so fast that it's hard to keep one on the job instructing the rising generation in the Coldriver school."

Deane shrank from the thought of the Three-Bar girl in such a mixture. She seemed many shades finer than the rest.

"It couldn't be otherwise," Harris said when Deane expressed this thought. "She was raised at the knee of one of the finest women in the world. I remember her mother myself—a little; and I've heard my own mother sing the praises of Elizabeth Warren, a thousand times."

The albino interrupted them.

"Cal, how come?" he greeted. The three men conversed in the most casual friendly fashion, as if there had never been a hint of friction between Harris and Harper in the past.

A great voice rose above the buzz of conversation, filling the big room to the very rafters.

"Choose your pardners for the dance!" Waddles bellowed from the makeshift platform at one end of the room. "Go get your ga-a-als!"

Deane moved across to the Three-Bar girl. There was a general rush for the side opposite the bar, where the ladies had gathered. Couples squared off for the Virginia reel, the shortage of ladies rectified by a handkerchief tied on the arm of many a youth to signify that he was, for the moment, a girl. Waddles picked his guitar; two fiddles broke into "Turkey in the Straw;" and the dance was on, with Waddles calling the turns.

All through the room they shuffled and bowed, whirled partners, locked elbows and swung, the shriek of fiddles and scrape of feet punctuated by the caller's boom.

"Grab your gals for the grand right an' left!" the big voice wailed. "Swing, rattle and roar! . . . Clutch all partners for a once and a half! . . . Swing your gals and swing 'em high! . . . Prance, scuffle and scrape!"

Slade came in alone as the first dance was ended.

A croupier and lookout, imported from Coldriver for the event, opened Brill's roulette layout in one corner, a game he usually operated himself on the occasions when his patrons chose to try their fortune against the bank. The rattle of chips, the whir of the ivory ball and the professional chant of lookout and croupier sounded between dances.

"Single ought in the green," the croupier droned.

"Single ought in the green," the look-



out echoed. "The pea-green shade is the bank's per cent. The house wins, and the gamblers lose. Place your bets for another turn."

"She's off," the croupier chanted. "Off again on the giddy whirl. The little ivory ball—she spins!"

"Ten in the black," the croupier called.

"Ten in the black," the lookout seconded. "The black pays, and the red falls off; the even beats the odd."

The full enjoyment of a novel scene was spoiled for Deane by the sickening realization that the Three-Bar girl was part of it, rubbing elbows with the nondescript throng. He looked again at Harper, the rustler chief; at Slade with his peculiar turtle-like face—Slade the cattle-king, the killer. Billie Warren stood between the two Epperson girls, whose faces betrayed the taint of Indian blood, an arm about the shoulders of each of them. The Sheriff, who had said that men must humor womenfolks, was leaning against the bar. Deane turned to Harris, but found him looking off across the room. He turned his own eyes that way and glimpsed a dark man with a thin, overlong face and a set bleak stare. Morrow had just come in.

Five minutes later Harris stepped out the back door, and Deane followed him. At the sound of a footfall behind him, Harris whirled on his heel, and when he confronted Deane, the dim light from the door glinted on something in his hand.

"Sho," Harris deprecated, "I'm getting spooky! I thought it was some one else." He slipped the gun back into its holster. "There's one or two that would like right well to run across me from behind."

"I followed you out to tell you it was decent of you to insist that I stay over a few days," Deane said. "It was a white thing to do, considering that we both want the same thing."

"We both want her to have what's best for her," Harris said. "And I don't know as she could do any better than to take up with you."

"It may sound rather trite—coming after that," Deane said. "But anyway, I'll have to say that I feel the same way about you."

"Then, if we're both right in our estimates, why, she can't go very far wrong either way she turns," Harris said. "So I reckon we're both content."

Harris moved on and motioned Deane to accompany him.

"I thought I glimpsed a man I knew a few minutes back," Harris said. "I'd like right well to have a talk with him."

They wandered completely round the post and looked in the shadows of the outbuildings but could find no trace of life.

"Likely I was mistaken," Harris said at last. "I saw a face just outside the door. He was more or less on my mind—the party I thought it was. Some one else, I expect, and he's gone inside."

They returned to the hall. Morrow stood with two Halfmoon-D men at the end of the bar. Harris motioned him aside, and Morrow withdrew from the others.

"This is pretty far north for you, Morrow," Harris suggested.

"Is there anyone restricting my range?" Morrow demanded. "If there is, I'd like to know."

"Then I'll tell you," Harris answered: "The road is open—as long as you keep on the road. Any time you stray a foot off the beaten trail, you're on the Three-Bar range. I don't figure to get gunned up from the brush more than once by the same man. Every Three-Bar boy

has orders to shoot you down on sight any time you heave in view anywhere within twenty miles of the Three Bar; so I wouldn't stray off the main-traveled road any time you're going through."

Lanky Evans had detached himself from a group, and Morrow looked up to find the tall man standing at his shoulder.

"So you hunt in pairs," Morrow remarked.

"And later in packs," Lanky returned. "Why don't you ever come up and visit us? Every time I'm riding north, I keep looking back expecting to see you come cantering up from the south. Harris been commenting about the little dead-line we've drawn on you?"

"What's the object of all this conversation?" Morrow flared. "If you've got anything to say to me, why, get it over with."

"Nothing special," Evans said. "I just thought maybe I could goad you into being imprudent enough to come up our way—which I'm sure hoping to observe you north of the line and somewhere within a thousand yards."

Evans turned away, and Morrow rejoined the two men he had left at the bar. Deane looked about him. Apparently no one had noticed the little byplay.

"Evans didn't exactly mean quite all of that," Harris explained.

"Of course, if Morrow does come up our way, Lanky would prefer to see him first—but he would rather he'd keep away. He staged that little talk as a safeguard for me. If Morrow acquires the idea that several folks are anxious to see him up there, he's apt to be real cautious how he prowls round the Three-Bar neighborhood looking for me."

Deane looked again at Morrow and saw that Moore and Horne had drawn him aside from the rest. The two Three-Bar men were grinning, and Morrow's face was set and scowling.

"The boys must have framed it up among themselves," Harris said. "That's the third pair I've seen conversing with him. It's doubtful whether Morrow is deriving much pleasure out of the dance."

Deane crossed over to Billie. The music started, but she shook her head as he would have led her to the floor.

"Sit down. I want to talk with you. Long time no see 'um after tonight," she said. "It'll be daylight soon, and I've a long tale to tell."

As the others danced, she gave him a dozen messages to impart to various friends.

"Tell Judge Colton that Three-Bar stock is rising," she said, "and that as soon as things are all smoothed out, he can expect me for a boarder. I'm going to make him one nice long visit."

Practically all of her time away from the Three Bar had been spent with Judge Colton's family, and she was accepted as part of the household. It was there she had met Deane and those others to whom her messages were sent.

Through an opening in the dancing throng Deane suddenly had a clear view of the open rear door—one brief glimpse before the crowd closed once more and shut off his view. He had an idea that he had seen a face, hazy and indistinct, a few feet outside the door. He wondered if it could be the friend for whom Harris had searched.

"Make the visit soon, Billie," he urged. "It's been long months since we've had you with us. We thought maybe you'd deserted us back there. How soon will this visit start—and how long will it last?"

"It will start as soon as the Three Bar doesn't need me," she said, "and last a long time."

Again a lane opened through the crowd, affording a view of the door. Deane saw the face outside in the night, and a foot or more below it some bright

their operations to the lower broken slopes, which they scoured for the scattered cedars of the foothills, cutting them for fence-posts and piling them in spots accessible to the wagons, to be hauled whenever the mule-teams could be spared.

The acreage of plowed earth increased day by day and would continue till frost claimed the ground. As soon as the brush was burned, the mule-teams pulled heavy log drags across the field, pulverizing the lumps of the heavy adobe soil and leveling inequalities of the surface.

Evans had been sent out as foreman of the beef round-up, while Harris remained behind to direct the operations at the ranch. The details of the new work were unfamiliar ones for the girl, and she was entirely absorbed in learning the reasons for every move—so much engrossed, in fact, that she had not left the Three Bar during the month which had elapsed since the dance at Brill's. A few days before Evans was due with the beef-herd, she rode Papoose away from the ranch, intending to make a long-deferred visit to the Brandons'.

After covering two-thirds of the distance along the foot of the hills to the V L, she saw a rider dip over a ridge two miles away. She unslung Harris' glasses and dismounted to watch for his re-



object glinted in the dim light which filtered through. The music ceased, and the chant of the roulette croupier began, mingling with the smooth purr of the ivory ball. There came a sudden hush from the vicinity of the rear door, a hush that spread rapidly throughout the room, so swift are the perceptions of a frontier gathering.

Old Rile Foster stood just inside, his gun half-raised before him. Canfield and Lang stood together in the center of the floor, apart from the rest and with no others in line beyond them. Rile tossed a boot-heel onto the floor, and as it rolled toward the two men, he shot Canfield through the chest. Lang's gun crashed almost with his own. Rile's knees sagged under him, and he pitched face down on the floor, his arms sprawled out before him.

The surge of the crowd, pressing back out of line, threw the albino Harper on the edge of it, his big form towering alone.

The old man raised his head from the floor and crooked his wrist with the last of his ebbing strength.

"Four for Bangs," he said, and shot Harper between the eyes.

CHAPTER XI

THE two loggers had finished cutting their quota of timber for the homestead cabins and the white peeled logs lay piled and ready to be snaked down to the Three Bar on the first heavy snows of fall. The choppers had transferred

The lightning-play broke forth once more. Harris' gun flashed six times. She jerked out her own.

appearance. When he came again into her field of view, another man was with him and they were driving

a few head of cows before them. They angled into a valley that led off to the south, dropping into it some three miles from her.

She mounted Papoose and headed him on a parallel course, keeping well out of sight behind the intervening waves of ground. After holding her direction at a stiff lope till satisfied that she had passed the men, she angled across to intersect their course.

As Papoose topped a low hogback that flanked the valley, she saw the men riding toward her down the bottoms, driving twenty or more head of cows. One of the horses threw up his head, his ears pricked sharply toward her, and the swift upward tilt of the rider's hat, as swiftly lowered, informed her that she had been sighted. The other man did not look up. They lifted their horses from a walk to a stiff trot and veered (*Continued on page 133*)



"Is it entered in the log-book, Cap'n?" "Sure as the shot I put in Black Jake's heart that night in San—"

Golden Toys

By Andrew Soutar

Illustrated by Frank Godwin

FOR a long while after the departure of Captain Dan'l Spike, that afternoon, at the Warrens, Sir Michael Dell pondered the questions which the old seaman had put to him in his quizzing, ruminative manner: "Now, who made the first toy? And what fur did he make it? And was there never no toy of your'n that came from nowhere, so to speak—leastways, not as you could remember—but was always to hand just when you wanted it and brought you more comfort and more happiness than anythin' your mother ever did for you? Some toys is like that. That's why I ask you: Who made the first toy and what fur did 'e make it?"

That afternoon Sir Michael had played the host to Captain Dan'l Spike for a couple of hours. And that which happened on the 'awn rose out of the category of coincidence and reached to the realms of suggestion. Sir Michael was so impressed by the process of his own reasoning that after dinner that night he placed the story before his friend, the Seeker After Truth, and was somewhat startled by the comment:

"It is fascinating, Sir Michael," he said. "More, it is a theory that holds more beauty than that which the spiritualist offers. The impulse, after I listened to your story, was to smile, incredulously." He paused, then inquired solicitously: "How is your boy, Hereward?"

"I don't know," said Sir Michael enigmatically. "Sometimes, I doubt that any of us understand the lad. In fact, I have never known anyone to arouse so much interest in him as did Captain Daniel Spike. I'm very grateful for the inspiration that led to my bringing the old man over. It was a risk, because Spike suggests his calling so strongly. The tang of the sea is in his very breath; one waits expectantly for the full, round oaths to slip out, no matter what the environment. I doubt if there's a port in the world that he hasn't touched. The lines in his face—a face that suggests nothing so much as a chipped block of mahogany—the lines tell of tight corners and hard

fight. Those who know him intimately will tell you that there was never a man born of whom Daniel Spike was afraid. There was never a sea so rough that he would not face it; there was never a piece of deviltry conceived which he would hesitate to participate in. They will tell you that there isn't a pilot, native or European, who could bring Daniel Spike's ship in better than he himself. I should say that his own gnarled hulk has carried enough strong water to poison a race, and I have been told that when he's ashore and 'running free,' to use his own words, it is suicidal to stand between him and his desires."

"And you brought this man to entertain your invalid boy?"

"Yes," said Sir Michael. "We try to study every whim of the lad, and it occurred to me that he might be interested. I have told you of only one phase of Captain Spike's character. Another is this: he loves children only a little less than children love him—children of all classes. They tell me that the children watch for the *Mary Johnson* coming in with the tide as eagerly as one might expect them to watch for the coming of Santa Claus. They know the lines of the *Mary Johnson*; they can pick her out of a river fog. He may be away a month, a year, but without consulting the owners, they learn in some extraordinary way the time when he should be back."

"When I came upon him a few days ago, he had been home only six hours. The hatches of the *Mary Johnson* were open and the stevedores were emptying mystery out of the bowels of the craziest-looking tramp-steamer that ever came up the river. The winches were screeching and rattling; a hundred feet were pounding over her iron deck; but I should say that not a single word of the story which Captain Daniel Spike was telling the group of children on the wharf was missed by one of them. He was enthroned on an iron stanchion, and the children were grouped around him; from their outward appearance, these children had come from the alleys and the slums."

"From my viewpoint, I could see the toys that, every now and

then, he brought from his bulging pockets; and every toy had a history that was linked up in a simple manner with the recipient. Old Spike began these stories in the same way, save that he altered the locale to suit the needs of the moment. I can hear him now: 'There was a li'le gal away up in Nagasaki gimme this toy for you. Mebbe you think you don't know her, but she knows you. 'Cause why? I could tell 'e, but I sha'n't—not now.' Or: 'There was a li'le black feller away down the West Indies, and he gimme this gulley-knife for you, and he says: "You tell him—"'

Sir Michael paused to smile at his own reflections. Then he added with a sigh:

"Riches couldn't buy the confidence which those children reposed in that old gargoye of a man." And then he went on to

relate how Captain Dan'l Spike had been invited to awaken out of seeming lethargy and disinterestedness in life the boy who had lain on an invalid's chair for so long—ever since the day that he fell from a tree in the garden.

THE chair was wheeled out into the sunshine, and when Captain Dan'l Spike ambled across the lawn, lurching from side to side as if to maintain balance on a rolling ship in a heavy sea, the boy's big eyes were illumined by a light which his father had never seen before. He had not been warned of the visit, but when his father had stooped and whispered, "A captain, Hereward, from the sea that you love so well," he replied, with a little gesture of resentment: "I can see that, Father." He nodded, welcomingly, to Captain Daniel Spike,

acknowledged the salute given with the forefinger, and said: "Come to the port side, Cap'n, please, so that I may see your face while you are talking."

Daniel had brought with him a collection of toys gathered from all parts of the globe, but the instant he looked into the boy's eyes, he tapped his pockets as if to say: "They stops there. He don't want no toys o' mine." He sat down on the cane chair placed near the invalid's, and his wrinkled, knotted face became more deeply rutted as he looked at the boy.

"I shall be fourteen, tomorrow, Cap'n." The eyelids closed for a second. (Sir Michael's lips twitched, and Daniel glanced at him and shook his head; he hadn't bargained for this.) "Yes, fourteen, Cap'n, and I've been lying here for four years. What do you think of that?"

Captain Daniel Spike was taking his bearings, finding wonderful assistance in the task by moistening his lips with the tip of his tongue and wiping them dry with the back of a hand that resembled a hickory knot. He grinned as the right answer flashed across his mind:

"You aint been lyin' here," he said. "Naw! This 'ere body might ha' been anchored in smooth water for four year," (almost reverently, he touched the boy's form), "but I reckon your thinkin'-box has been along o' me on many a trip. Bust my breeches, but I 'members a boy away there in Hongkong—a weeny, teeny slip of a fellow he wor—"

"Yes, Cap'n, they used to wheel me to the beach so that I might see the ships go out. I liked to see them at night, when the lights were lit, and the lookout was in the crow's-nest. I used to climb up the rigging and get into the nest with him. Have you ever been wrecked, Cap'n?"

"Many's the time."

"On a desert island, Cap'n Spike?"

Daniel looked hard at Sir Michael before he replied:

"Once, and I 'ope the ol' tub'll take me down to the mermaids afore I gets wrecked on another."

Again the big eyes closed, and there was a period of silence. Then the boy asked:



"Is it entered in the log-book, Cap'n?"

"Sure as the shot I put in Black Jake's heart that night in San—"

"You may tell me that story another time, Cap'n. Where was this desert island?"

"Five days' sail from Christmas Island, yonder in the Pacific, steaming ten knots ag'in' the wind, and—"

"I know the island. . . . Father, will you get me the atlas?"

Sir Michael searched in the pockets of the invalid chair, turning out in the search a multitude of toys of all descriptions. The boy checked him, and Sir Michael was grateful for the relief.

"I remember the latitude and longitude. Funny that I should think of it, now. Eh?"

"You been there," said Cap'n Spike, affecting the casualness of one sailorman to another. "That was the island."

A nurse came across the lawn to express the fear that the sun was too strong for the lad. The boy trembled with indignation. "Father," he said with ludicrous gravity, "I've sailed with Cap'n Spike, and we've seen the Lascars brought out of the engine-room and doused with water to bring 'em around, the heat being strong—haven't we, Cap'n?"

"Jest as you say, boy," Spike's eyes were magnificently bold, full of the light of camaraderie.

"He is quite comfortable—thank you, nurse," said Sir Michael.

The boy smiled gratefully. "Now tell me your story, Cap'n," he said, adding in a deeper tone, and warningly: "Keep to the log-book, Cap'n—keep to the log."

From that moment Sir Michael Dell suffered complete effacement. He was forgotten by the kindred souls that came to each other in glorious affinity that had its inception in the cradle of the sea, in the spume of the waves that leaps out to whip the face that looks from the bridge. The one, old and tanned and creased, yet in his nature as sweet and clean as the rains of heaven; the other young as the baby sea-anemone stirring in the crevices fathoms deep.

"Now, Cap'n," said Daniel Spike, and the boy's cheeks flushed with pride at the appellation, "mebbe, you wont believe this; mebbe you will; but here's one that doesn't care whether you do or whether you don't. We was talkin' about a desert island, and this is a yarn about an island that you wont find on the chart—well, you might, 'cause you've been to most places, same as me. I was skipper of an ol' tramp, name o' *Pegasus*, and she couldn't do no more'n ten knots—no, not if ol' Mac fired her up until his engines well-nigh busted. We'd been runnin' round the Austrilian ports, pickin' up cargo here and there, same as we didn't care whether we had it or not. We laid idle in Sydney—Lord! D'you know the Sydney Heads? Then I gets me papers for Nagasaki. The ol' *Pegasus* wor nearly empty, 'cause we was to pick up I dunno what from the Japs. We had a scratch crew, as you might say, and I wouldn't have put an ounce of confidence in any one of them. They worn't sailormen; they was dagoes; and if you got a roll on you that was anywhere near thirty-five, they was whinin' and tremblin' same as they hadn't got the heart of a fly. We was a day or two out of Christmas Island, Cap'n, when we hit what I should call the tail of a monsoon that had busted loose and was twistin' and turnin' away up the Pacific same as it couldn't find its body, and till it did find it, there was goin' to be 'ell to pay.

"I told you we was light, and you knows how a boat rolls when she's light. Nothin' to keep her down; nothin' to steady her. The smash came on the fifth day out and about an hour before dawn. I had been on the bridge all night, 'cause the first mate funk'd it and the others were no-account men. Most of the sheets had carried away, and the bul'arks was stove in same as somebody had come up from the locker and walloped 'em wi' a hammer. Course, the hatches was battened down; and the crew, so far as I can 'member, was in the fo'c'stle thinking of all the prayers they ever sent up and askin' each other what in the name o' God persuaded 'em to sign on for this trip. . . . Have you got that clear, Cap'n?"

"**Q**UITE," said the boy with solemn countenance. "But why didn't you use more authority? When you deal with a mind that is not so strong as your own, you should impress your own strong personality upon those beneath you."

"That trick's yourn," said Cap'n Daniel Spike. "You're right, but—you ought to know—you can't handle furriers as easy as you might wish. They got their religion, and religion aint no good to sailormen when you're in trouble. What I says is this: You and me aint selected, so to speak, to skipper a boat because we happens to have a little influence at the head office. They

takes us 'cause we're the right sort of sailormen. Now, let me tell yer, and believe it or disbelieve it.

"An hour before dawn, I seen somethin' away on the port side that had me guessin', as Yankee Joe would say. Out of the darkness come a shape like an island, and bust me breeches, I got it into me head the sun was shinin' right down on it. Yes, the sun, although it was an hour before daybreak! Said I to myself: 'There aint no island in this latitude. I knows every spot o' dirt 'tween here and Nagasaki. And if there's an island there, it's been coughed up durin' the night.' And still, there it was, with the sun shinin' down and winkin' at me same as it was saying: 'Here ye are, Dan'l. Smooth water, my boy, wi' plenty to eat and drink until the wind goes down.' And then, as I says to you, the crash come. We hit a derelict—hit her good and hard; and afore I could say, 'Get the boats out,' I was in the water, swimmin' away from the *Pegasus* so's she wouldn't take me down in the suction. Somebody gripped me by the shoulder jest when I was sayin' good-by to all the kiddies I ever knowed. I was hauled into the boat, and there was Peter Broke, Joe Nabb and a black boy we'd picked up in Sydney. They hadn't nothin' to say, and when I wiped the salt out of my eyes, I could see that they hadn't got two penny 'orth of pluck to share among 'em.

"'All right,' I says. 'Three degrees west, and we're there. There's an island!'

THEY rowed, but I could see by their faces that they didn't believe me. I fancy they thought that ol' Dan'l had lost his bearings and was finished; but within an hour, Cap'n, we was haulin' the boat up the beach. The fools! They was so glad to get ashore that they left the boat and she was swep' out on the next tide, and flung back at us, smashed to bits. I didn't have much to say to 'em about that. You know, Cap'n, there's times when you feel that you can't say anythin' without losing yer head. This was one of 'em. If I'd begun to tell 'em that they worn't no sailormen, I'd have had 'em in irons, so to speak—aye, within five minutes.

"We went inland and found a stream. That was lucky, 'cause as you know, a man can live on water longer'n he can live on bread. I dunno why, but the others kep' away from me. I could see it when I came back to the camp after trudin' inland. They never give me, 'Good evening, Cap'n,' or, 'What have you found, Cap'n?' or, 'How long d'you think we shall be here, Cap'n, afore we're picked off?' No, they looked at each other and winked, same as they were saying: 'We guessed how it would be.' You see, before they picked me up, I ran me head into a spar, and they got it into their mind that I was knocked all anyhow.

"Before a couple of days had gone by, I come to the conclusion that they'd be glad if, by some chance, a rock rose out of the ground and give me another whack on the head. Mark ye, they hadn't the pluck to face me an' fight it out. They was jest hopin' for things to happen. . . . There was a few monkeys on the island. Well, some men can eat monkeys when they's hungry,—dead hungry,—but I couldn't. I could never abear the squeal they give when you was gettin' near to 'em and they knew what was in your mind.

"I come back one afternoon and found the others hard at work on the boat, making her shipshape, and again they looked at me same as they didn't know what they was goin' to do when the boat was ready. Somethin' had happened, that afternoon, while I was inland, and like a fool that I was, I blurted it out. Said I to Peter Broke: 'We aint alone on this island. There's a woman due south—the most beautiful woman you ever put your cross-eyes upon. Only a gal, wi' long yaller hair hanging over her shoulders.'

"Instead of tellin' me that I was a liar, as I expected him to do, he shook his head and walked away, and in a minute or two I saw him talkin' to Joe Nabb and the negro, and they glanced at me over their shoulders. I hadn't lied to 'em; I told 'em the truth. It was about three in the afternoon, and I had been climbin' the hills for mebbe four hours. When I looked over the edge, I saw the beach on the south side of the island—a long, white, sun-dried beach; and of a sudden, this gal come out, walking same as she was a princess. Every now and then she would lift her right hand and throw her long yaller hair back out of her neck. She was going to bathe in the sea. 'Now,' said I to myself, 'where did she come from? And what is she doin' here?' She went into the water and came out, and the sun seemed to wrap itself all round her and kiss her and fondle her so that she was like a pillar o' gold. . . . Are you listenin', Cap'n?"

"To every word," said the boy.

(Continued on page 90)



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"And do you believe it, Cap'n?"

"Every word," said the boy again.

"Good!" said Captain Dan'l Spike. "They didn't. I knows what they was sayin' to each other. 'The ol' man's head is goin'. He's dangerous.'"

"Somethin' happened the next day that I had to tell 'em about. I come back after the sun had dropped. You know, Cap'n, how the sun drops in them parts. One minute up, the next minute down. They lit a fire on the beach, and the negro and Joe Nabb was hammerin' away at the boat, while Peter Broke stood off and smoked. He'd had his turn and was restin'."

"Boys," said I, 'we're all right. There's an air-*air*plane on this island.'"

"Air-*air*plane!" says they; and ag'in they looked at each other; and Peter Broke nodded at Joe Nabb.

"Cut it out," says I. 'You think I'm loony; I aint. I'm tellin' you what I've seen with these two eyes o' mine. Yesterday it was the gal. Today, it's the air-*air*plane and a man—a boy.' They listened to me, but I could see that they didn't believe me. But I told 'em what I'd seen faithfully, jest as it's written in the log—my log, the log that's hidden here, Cap'n, in my breast.

"**W**HAT had I seen? The gal came out into the sunshine, walking more'n ever like a princess. Once she turned her head so that she looked inland, and I could see her face. There never was another face like hers. Cap'n, it was softer in expression than the sun that lies on Alexandria when you drift in through the palm trees. You 'member the palm trees that seem to lift their heads out of the sea itself? Her eyes—yes, I could see her eyes even from that distance—were kinder than a rain when the water-keg's been empty for a week. She walked along the beach and raised

her arms same as she was signalin' to somebody. Then out of the sun, right out of nowhere, there came this air-*air*plane. And it wor different from any air-*air*plane that you ever saw. It was like a swan, with wings stretched out to the wind, and just between the wings there was this young feller I've been tellin' you about.

"He glided down jest like a boat takin' the water from the slips, and he stepped out of his air-*air*plane and went up to the princess. I saw him put his arms round her neck, and he kissed her different from any man I ever seed kiss a woman. He made me think of all the kids that was waitin' for ol' Dan Spike when he should drop anchor in smooth water, with his pockets full of toys and his ol' head full of stories. Ah! There aint no love like the love that gets hold of you by the heart and makes you wish that a lion or somethin' would leap out just to frighten the little gal that you're holdin', so's you could take it with your bare hands and strangle the life out of it!

"This lad, he held the princess in his arms, and her long yaller hair was blowing all over his head and face.

"They went into a cave, but they was out again in no time, and I could see him wrap somethin' about her shoulders as if he was afraid that she would catch cold. . . . Mebbe you thinks I'm makin' all this up, Cap'n, but I aint. It was real to my eyes. I've done some hard things in my life, and wicked, but while I was set there watchin' them two, I felt like I used to feel when I was little—no higher'n that. Mebbe, when you was little, you had a toy that you liked more'n another—one that you used to play with and pretend that it could take you jest where you wanted to go. I ask you, Cap'n, come to think of it—is it all pretend when we're little?"

"No—not all," said the boy, still solemn and, apparently, lost in thought.

CAPTAIN DAN'L SPIKE paused to scratch his head.

"I aint got much l'arnin'," he said, screwing up his eyes as if that would aid memory, "but if I 'member right, there was a feller by the name o' Percy—"

"Perseus?"

"That's the feller, with the winged sandals, wasn't it? And if you calls it to mind, Cap'n, he flew to an island and rescued a little gal o' the name o' Dromedary—"

"Andromeda," said the boy with wonderful sympathy.

"Jest as you say, yourself," said Captain Dan'l Spike. "Well, as I watched these two on the beach, I got it into my head that he'd come to rescue her, she havin' been dropped on the island by the enemy. He didn't care for no wind nor monsoon, or anythin' like that. She was his little gal, and he come through the sunshine right down from the clouds to rescue her. And as I watched, he helped her into this air-*air*plane of his—jest like a swan, it was. Funny how it got hold of me. I wanted to shout out: 'Take me with you,' and yet I knew that I should only be in the way. 'Twasn't no dream of mine. They was boy and gal, and as sweet as snowdrops, and as white. I didn't tell you that—did I? It seemed to me that I could look right through 'em. I didn't tell Peter that, nor Joe Nabb, nor the negro, else they might have been justified in thinking that ol' Dan Spike had got out of his course, and was runnin' before the wind. That air-*air*plane took off, slipped up into the air as easily as a feather might go in a high wind. Round and round they circles, and once they came so low down that I ducked me head, thinkin' the air-*air*plane would strike me as I lay there on the crest of the hill.

"Then come the darkness. Down went the sun with that nasty habit it has in the tropics. I went back to the camp. Long afore I reached it, I could see the fire the men had built on the beach, but I couldn't see them, and a horrible sort of feelin' come over me that they'd played it low down on ol' Dan. I reckon that I was near mad with fright—no, fright aint the word, but you can figure it out. When I got to the beach, I could see them pushing off in the boat which they'd patched up. They were gettin' away without me. I yelled to 'em. Peter Broke, he ups with his fist and shakes it at me; and Joe Nabb, I can hear him as plain as you can hear me, now; he yells at the negro: 'Quick, or the loony'll get aboard.'"

"There y'are. The tale that I told 'em about the gal and the boy had started 'em wonderin' if I wasn't loony. They'd patched up the boat and were anxious to get away and leave me there, fearin' that if they took me aboard, there'd be a mighty lot of trouble. Within ten minutes they was out of sight and 'earin', and there I was, alone on the island; and bust me breeches, they hadn't left me so much as half a pint of water. There was nothin' to eat, nothin' to do 'cept set down beside that fire and shut my eyes and dream about all the kids who would be waitin' at home on the wharf, waitin' for Captain Dan'l Spike to come in on the tide with his pockets



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full o' toys and his head chock full of stories.

"Cap'n, I reckon you aint the sort to misjudge another. Look at that hand!" He extended his right hand clenched. "That's killed a buck nigger, that has," he said. "He was layin' on to a kiddy no more'n ten when I hove in sight. Yes, killed him wi' one hit, it did. But I don't mind tellin' you that as I sat on the beach, that night, and thought of all those little shavers strainin' their eyes for a sight of the ol' boat comin' up on the last tide, I cried—I did, so help me God, I did. And I wondered if they'd 'member me years after, and if anybody would have something better to say of Dan Spike than the ol' story that he was runnin' free with two months' pay in his pocket.

"AFTER a bit, I tried to make up the fire, but the wood wouldn't burn. I reckon I went a little crazy during the next hour or two, 'cause when I come to myself ag'in, I was on the south side of the island and near the beach where I'd seen the airyplane and the boy and the princess. I lay there until the dawn came. . . . Cap'n, you and me knows what an Eastern dawn is like—don't we? There aint nothin' like it on this hemisphere. Lord! Don't it make you think of your mother and all the beautiful things that ever happened in your life?

"I've tried to calculate how far I was out of me course when we hit that derelict, and as near as I can figure it out, I was mebbe two hundred miles out of the track of any ship. All that day, right up to an hour before sunset, I searched for food, but there was none to be found, and I was beginnin' to think hard things about Peter Broke and Joe Nabb and other sailormen who could deliberately leave a shipmate to die, when somethin' came between me and the sunset. At first it looked like a wisp of white cloud, but you don't look for clouds in that latitude—do you, Cap'n? A few minutes, and then I knew it for the airyplane. It come swoopin' down like the big bird that it was. I was settin' in the shade of a boulder on the beach, and I didn't dare move lest I should frighten them away.

"They dropped less than twenty yards from where I was settin'. They'd come

back for something they'd forgotten. Funny how they made me forget me own troubles. They left the airyplane on the beach and walked to the cave, and his arm was round her waist, and her little yaller head was restin' on his shoulder. Never had I seen such an airyplane—different from all you've ever seen in the picture books—jest like a swan, as I told yer, with lovely tapering wings. In a bit, they come back; I knowed they was goin', but I wouldn't call out—not me, not me. Somehow, I don't think they would have understood me if I had spoken. . . . If you're sayin' to yourself, Cap'n, that it was all a dream, I'm goin' to tell you, right here an' now, that you're wroge. How can I prove it? Easy! Jest afore he helped her into the seat, he whispered in her ear, an' she laughed back at him. He picked up a piece of limestone from the beach, an' he wrote a name—her name, mebbe—underneath the right-hand wing. I could see it as plain as plain. How do I 'member it? 'Cause I wrote it down in this ol' pocketbook that's been wi' me on every trip I've made. They sailed up an' away. I called to 'em this time: 'Help!' I shouted. 'There's ol' Dan Spike stranded on this island, an' all the kids that he loves is waitin' for him back home.'

"I fancied that I heard the whir of those wings: it was gettin' dark now, and I couldn't see distinctly. I shouted: 'They done been an' left me! An' the kids will sob their hearts out this very night, so they will, 'cause only Dan Spike understands 'em as kiddies ought to be understood!' Again I heard that rush of wings, an' then there wor silence. The good Lord only knows how long I laid there, but when I opened my eyes again, I saw the twinkling light of a drifter. A little more, an' they wor sendin' up rockets."

CAP'N DAN'L SPIKE lay back in his chair and wiped his forehead, now liberally besprinkled with drops of perspiration.

"Taint the desert island story that ye expected," he said, half-apologetically, "but it's truth. I aint told it to a soul 'cept you an'—"

The boy's voice broke in, almost sharply, querulously:

"Tell me, Cap'n," he said, "what was the name under the wing of your albatross—your swan?"

Cap'n Dan'l Spike pursed his lips and narrowed his eyes as though he were afraid that his audience had reached the limits of credulity. Then slowly and laboriously he turned over the sea-soiled pages of his black-backed notebook until he came to a rough drawing that he had made of that which he averred he had seen on the island in the South Pacific.

"There you be," he said at last. And he spelled out the word: "*E-s-g-u-e-r-i-t-a*"—adding, with a sigh, that he had no idea of what it might mean.

He was about to hand the notebook to the boy, but Sir Michael checked him with a gesture, for the boy's eyes had closed. Sir Michael said: "I'm afraid that the sun has been too strong for him." He signaled to a nurse, and between them they wheeled the boy into the house.

Cap'n Dan'l Spike had made no movement. His eyes, too, were closed, and his lips were twittering foolishly.

PRESENTLY, Sir Michael returned. He was carrying something in his right hand. He touched Cap'n Dan'l Spike on the shoulder and said: "Cap'n, I want to talk to you. That story of yours—"

"Real," said Cap'n Dan'l Spike without opening his eyes. "Real—every word of it."

"Look at this," said Sir Michael.

And Cap'n Dan'l Spike opened his eyes to look at the small model of an air-
plane—an airplane fashioned on the lines of a swan, or rather an albatross!

"Same as that one," said Cap'n Dan'l.

Sir Michael said: "My boy made it himself: he's very fond of inventing toys. He made this some years ago; he used to lie in the sunshine and pretend that he had been away on a trip in the clouds—"

"Turn her over—turn her over," said Cap'n Dan'l.

And there, under the right wing of the toy, was the word: "*Esquerita!*"

It was then that Cap'n Dan'l Spike put to Sir Michael Dell those questions about toys. And he added, very softly, and very wistfully:

"I wonder where sick kiddies go to in their dreams?"

MCCLEOD'S PARTNER

(Continued from
page 41)

catch for winter food for himself and Pard.

If the Indian's tales were true, and he believed they were, his goal lay somewhere hidden in the hills within fifty miles of his camp. Through the winter, when not busy with his trap-lines, he would make a systematic exploration of the whole surrounding country. On snowshoes in one winter he could cover more territory than it was possible to cruise out in many summers' prospecting. But the deep snow would prevent anything more than a location of the lake; in the summer he could return. When the swamps froze and the going became good in the bush, he would start traveling.

But unless he blundered into some luck early in the winter, the whole venture would depend on the game. If that proved scarce, his supplies would not carry him beyond February, and he would be driven back to Nepigon.

LATE in September the magic of the frosts had blazened the deep green of spruce and jack-pine forests with the flame of birch and poplar. With the coming of the sharp October nights man and dog sat by the welcome fire outside the unfinished shack, listening to the far voices of the armies of geese racing south, high up under the glittering stars. Later on came a brief interlude of fair

days and mild, and then the stinging winds, loosed from the great Bay to the north, stripped the hardwood of its yellow and gold and locked lake and river and forest tight under the long snows.

The canoe was cached in the spruce. And with the first snow began the education of Pard as a toiler of the trails. McCleod had ready a small toboggan and a moose-hide harness, and the eager puppy was soon traveling with the sled over the broken trail to the traps.

But the coming of the snow had brought in its wake a grave cause for worry. In following his trap-lines McCleod had noticed a marked scarcity of rabbit-tracks. The winter before, they



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How Your Hair Should Improve Your Looks

Illustrations by WILL GREFFÉ

EVERYWHERE you go your hair is noticed most critically. It tells the world what you are.

If you wear your hair becomingly and always have it beautifully clean and well-kept, it adds more than anything else to your attractiveness.

Beautiful hair is not a matter of luck, it is simply a matter of care.

Study your hair, take a hand mirror and look at the front, the sides, and the back. Try doing it up in various ways. See just how it looks best.

A slight change in the way you dress your hair, or in the way you care for it, makes all the difference in the world in its appearance.

In caring for the hair, shampooing is always the most important thing.

It is the shampooing which brings out the real life and lustre, natural wave and color, and makes your hair soft, fresh and luxuriant.

When your hair is dry, dull and heavy, lifeless, stiff and gummy, and the strands cling together, and it feels harsh and disagreeable to the touch, it is because your hair has not been shampooed properly.

When your hair has been shampooed properly, and is thoroughly clean, it will be glossy, smooth and bright, delightfully fresh-looking, soft and silky.

While your hair must have frequent and regular washing to keep it beautiful, it cannot stand the harsh effect of ordinary soaps.

The free alkali in ordinary soaps soon dries the scalp, makes the hair brittle and ruins it.

For this reason more and more women everywhere now use Multisified Coconut Oil Shampoo. This clear, pure and entirely greaseless product cannot possibly injure and it does not dry the scalp, or make the hair brittle, no matter how often you use it.

It is really surprising how beautiful you can make your hair look.

Follow This Simple Method

FIRST, wet the hair and scalp in clear, warm water. Then, apply a little Multisified Coconut Oil Shampoo, rubbing it in thoroughly, all over the scalp and throughout the entire length, down to the ends of the hair.

Rub the Lather in Thoroughly

TWO or three teaspoons will make an abundance of rich, creamy lather. This should be rubbed in thoroughly and briskly with the finger tips, so as to loosen the dandruff and small particles of dust and dirt that stick to the scalp.

When you have done this, rinse the hair and scalp thoroughly, using clear, fresh warm water. Then use another application of Multisified.

Two waters are usually sufficient for washing the hair, but sometimes the third is necessary.

You can easily tell, for when the hair is perfectly clean it will be soft and silky in the water, the strands will fall apart easily, each separate hair floating alone in the water, and the entire mass, even while wet, will feel loose, fluffy and light to the touch and be so clean, it will fairly squeak when you pull it through your fingers.

Your Hair Should be Dressed so as to Emphasize Your Best Lines and Improve Poor Ones.

Begin by studying your profile. If you have a pug nose, do not put your hair on the top of your head; if you have a round, fat face, do not fluff your hair out too much at the sides; if your face is very thin and long, then you should fluff your hair out at the sides. The woman with the full face and double chin should wear her hair high. All these and other individual features must be taken into consideration in selecting the proper hairdress. Above all, simplicity should prevail. You are always most attractive when your hair looks most natural—when it looks most like you.

Rinse the Hair Thoroughly

THIS is very important. After the final washing the hair and scalp should be rinsed in at least two changes of good, warm water and followed with a rinsing in cold water.

After a Multisified shampoo, you will find the hair will dry quickly and evenly and have the appearance of being much thicker and heavier than it is.

If you want to always be remembered for your beautiful, well-kept hair, make it a rule to set a certain day each week for a Multisified Coconut Oil Shampoo. This regular weekly shampooing will keep the scalp soft, and the hair fine and silky, bright, fresh-looking and fluffy, wavy and easy to manage, and it will be noticed and admired by everyone.

You can get Multisified Coconut Oil Shampoo at any drug store or toilet goods counter. A 4-ounce bottle should last for months.

The Shampoo for the whole family

Makes women's hair beautiful. Fine for children. Men like it.

Economical and Convenient. Easy to use. Effective. Delightfully exhilarating. Sold by all drug stores in 4 oz. bottles. Try it.



WATKINS
MULTISIFIED
COCONUT OIL SHAMPOO



had everywhere been numerous. He realized that it must be the year of the rabbit plague. This meant a bad winter for lynxes and foxes, who would range widely in search of their chief food. It also meant a lean winter for the trapper, whose rabbit-snares, when game was scarce, often stood between him and starvation.

If he failed to find the lake of the mine, he would need a good fur-catch in order to prospect the following summer, for his prospecting trips were financed by his trapping.

Throughout December, blizzard followed blizzard, until by the first of the year the depth of snow in the forest levels out of the drift-area was four feet. But in spite of the difficulty in traveling due to wind and drift, McCleod had already circled over a wide territory.

His decision to keep most of his flour for emergency compelled him to hunt much of his time, as the scarcity of snowshoe rabbits made his snares of little value, and although he had a net set under the ice, the fish were not moving. On his scaffold cache there remained a month's supply of frozen fish, which he was saving for Pard. The puppy had now grown into a magnificent specimen of the husky, weighing well over a hundred pounds, massive of bone and frame, with a glossy pelt of long slate-gray and white hair, buttressed by a mat of fine fur next the skin.

ONE day in January the two friends were returning to camp from a round of the traps when Pard picked up a fresh rabbit-trail, and, floundering through the soft snow, followed it into a black spruce swamp. Soon from the depths of the bush arose a medley of snarls, succeeded by the unmistakable clamor of combat.

Leaving the trail, McCleod hurried to the aid of his dog.

That it was neither lynx nor wolverine which the dog was battling in the spruce was clear, for the catlike squall of the lynx and the fierce guttural of the carcajou were absent from the milling. Unmistakably Pard was mixing it with a timber wolf, and a full-grown timber wolf was more than a match for most dogs. So the man plunged headlong into the scrub and forced his way to the scene of battle.

There, in a small opening where lay a half-eaten snowshoe rabbit, two shaggy, blood-flecked beasts, sinking to their shoulders in the deep snow at every leap, were catapulting into each other, slashing savagely with bared fangs as they met. Handicapped by the absence of any footing, the wolf was unable to spring in, slice his heavier foe and leap out of range, as he would have done on firm ground, but was forced to battle at close quarters, so fiercely did the infuriated dog press him.

As McCleod, fearful for the raw puppy in his first meeting with so terrible a fighter, thrust forward his cocked rifle to make an end to it, Pard again hurled himself at the wolf, which was powerless to avoid him in the soft snow. The jaws of the beast, carried backward by the lunge of the husky, snapped but missed, while Pard's long fangs slashed deep into the throat of his enemy. Frantically the

fast-weakening animal fought to escape the heavy body bearing him down, but the maddened husky struck again and again, slicing the throat of his now helpless foe to ribbons; and the stricken beast, gasping out its life, relaxed in the crimsoned snow.

Then the spruce was filled with the wild yell of John McCleod.

"Pard!" he cried. "Good old Pard! Licked him to a standstill!"

But the husky, hot with the fury of battle and the blood-lust of his wild heritage, continued to worry the throat of his dead enemy until he felt the touch of the master's hand.

Switching his bushy tail and still trembling with excitement, he turned his slant eyes to the man's, then back to the wolf, and raising his nose in the manner of his kind, howled a pean of victory over the stiffening carcass in the snow.

"Let's see what he did to you, lad!" McCleod was on his knees examining the slashes in Pard's neck and shoulders.

"Just missed getting you here; I was scared you'd be careless. Never give a timber wolf a chance at your throat."

Then the arms of the man circled the shaggy neck, and the pounding heart of Pard speeded its beat as the bearded face of the master sought his massive forehead.

"A little more experience, son," the loved voice murmured in the furry ear, "a few months more growth, and no howl in these parts will have any business with my pup. But they're crafty, lad, and you've got to learn their tricks."

Skinning the wolf before the carcass froze, McCleod cached it in a spruce for use later in baiting his traps and hurried back to camp, for the wounds of Pard, already stiffening in the freezing air, demanded attention.

WITH the big January winds the snow continued to increase, and game became increasingly difficult to find. McCleod had not crossed the round-toed track of a caribou since December. In February, after a long trip into the bush, however, he found a cow-moose stalled in the deep snow. By this time the fish supply was gone, and McCleod had cut deep into the emergency flour. The moose carried them well into March.

With March came the first crust, and with the better footing, McCleod wavered for a few days over the advisability of a retreat to Nepigon while he yet had meat for the journey. For if once the big April thaw caught them, they would be held prisoners for weeks in the forest. April,—in the Ojibway tongue, "The Moon of the Breaking of the Snowshoes,"—when rotten ice barred the waterways and soggy snow the trails to all travel in the North, might well mean starvation to himself and his dog. But he had yet to cruise the country west of him for the elusive lake of the mine, and stubbornly he decided to risk starvation.

One March afternoon the trapper sat in his shack mending his snowshoes, wondering where the next meat was coming from, for they were nearing the end of the moose. To eke out their meager rations he was already breaking up the round bones for the marrow and re-

boiling them for soup. A scratching, followed by a yelp at the door, announced the return of Pard from a hunt.

McCleod opened the door to admit the husky, who leaped upon him tense with excitement, his slate-gray muzzle smeared with blood. In the snow lay a dead lynx which the dog turned upon and shook, growling with a fine show of ferocity.

"You old he fighter!" exclaimed the surprised man, caressing the proud Pard. "Killed a lynx, with hardly a scratch to show for it, and toted him clear home to show him to your partner."

"Yes, I thought so!" continued the trapper, examining the dead cat, wasted with emaciation. "Starved out by the rabbit-plague! That explains why he didn't claw you up more. You must have run him down and broken his back before he could tree."

Glad to get both pelt and the meat,—what there was of it,—the trapper skinned the lynx and stored the carcass on his cache. He had never eaten lynx, but the time was approaching when he would. It had been a lean winter indeed for the furred assassins of the forest,—this winter of the rabbit-plague,—as well as for the hunters who sought them; and he wondered how many starvation camps of Ojibways between Nepigon and the Albany were praying for spring—how long before his own would become a camp of misery. The net and his set-lines through the ice were giving him no fish; it was weeks since he had snared a rabbit. His flour was gone, and counting the lynx, his meat would hardly carry him to April, even on short rations. If he shot no further meat in the meantime, it meant starvation for himself and the great dog he loved—the puppy who less than a year before had missed by a hair the fate which ever pursues the furred and feathered denizens of the forest, which ever hovers, a grim specter, over the tepees of the children of the snows.

While the crust still held hard for snowshoeing—before the shifting winds brought the first April thaws, and the snow went soft in the bush—McCleod and Pard found a family of beaver twenty miles east over the Height-of-Land on Ogoke waters, and brought home enough meat on the sled to carry them into the big break-up.

THEN in a fortnight came the warm winds with rain and sleet, varied by shifts, with frost at night. The crust and trails turned to slush, and the ice in the lakes began to honeycomb. With but rations for a week in the cache, McCleod and Pard were now marooned—all retreat to Nepigon shut off until the ice should clear from the waterways in May. Nightly the desperate man sat staring hopelessly into the fire, the dog's great head on his knee. Often the slant brown eyes, shining with worship of the bearded master, would seek those of McCleod gazing vacantly at the burning birch on the hearth. Missing the old-time response to his mute advances, the husky would prod and nudge the inert body of the man into sentient being. Then the heartsick McCleod and his shaggy partner would have their bed-time frolic, which always ended with Pard's landing on his



Every normal skin needs two creams

A protective cream for daytime use
A cleansing cream at night

Complexion flaws prevented by a daytime cream without oil

Rough, chapped skin. To make up for the drying effect of dust and wind you need a daytime cream that softens and protects the skin without adding a particle of oil. Before going out into the cold air, touch your face and neck and hands with Pond's Vanishing Cream. It disappears at once and leaves the skin delightfully soft and satiny.

Shiny skin. This almost universal annoyance is due to powdering without providing a base for the powder. Try powdering this way—

First rub the face lightly with Pond's Vanishing Cream. It cannot reappear in a shine. See how smoothly and evenly the powder goes on over this base and how long it stays.

Dull, tired skin. When you are tired apply a little Pond's Vanishing Cream to your face. It instantly relieves the strained look about the eyes and mouth and gives the whole face a fresh youthfulness.

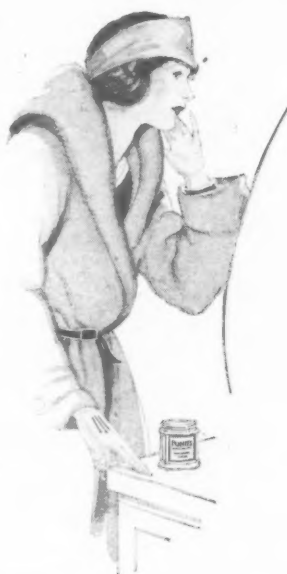


POND'S Vanishing Cream

Start using these two creams today

The regular use of these two creams helps your skin to become continually lovelier.

They will not clog the pores or encourage the growth of hair. In both jars and tubes in convenient sizes. At any drug or department store. The Pond's Extract Co., New York.



Before going out smooth a little Pond's Vanishing Cream into the skin

Flaws prevented by nightly cleansing with an oil cream

Blackheads. Blackheads need a more thorough cleansing than ordinary washing can give.

Wash your face with hot water and pure soap. Then work Pond's Cold Cream thoroughly into the pores. As this rich oil cream penetrates the skin, it loosens all the dirt which has lodged deep in the pores. Wipe the cream off with a soft cloth. This leaves the skin really clean.

Wrinkles. For wrinkles you need a cream with an oil base, for oil is the greatest enemy known to wrinkles. Pond's Cold Cream, rubbed gently into the face at night, acts as a tonic, stimulating the blood, rousing the skin, and warding off the wrinkles. Too vigorous rubbing is apt to be harmful, but gentle, persistent rubbing, systematically done, is beneficial even to the most delicate skin.



POND'S Cold Cream

GENEROUS TUBES—MAIL COUPON TODAY

THE POND'S EXTRACT CO.,
169 Hudson St., New York.

Ten cents (10c) is enclosed for your special introductory tubes of the two creams every normal skin needs—enough of each cream for two weeks' ordinary toilet uses.

Name _____

Street _____

City _____ State _____

"My solace for the future"

The following letter opens up a subject smokers often talk about:

W. H. TALLMADGE
Hickory Lodge
241 Summer Street, Stamford, Conn.

October 27, 1920

Larus & Bro. Co.
Richmond, Va.
Gentlemen:

Your free samples of smoking tobacco fell on fertile soil. I have been a burner of the weed since I was 14 years old, and now I am 78 and full of vigor. I never smoked Edgeworth before receiving your samples. It will be my solace for the future, and several of my friends are acquiring the habit. Thanking you for the compliment bestowed, I am,

Yours truly,

[Signed] W. H. Tallmadge

The ripe ages reached by pipe smokers are frequently dwelt on in the newspapers.

Here is a man "78 and full of vigor" who has been a smoker for 64 years' running.

A New York newspaper recently mentioned a doctor of note, aged 91, who had been a smoker for 80 years.

These men, ripe with experience, may not have lived to such fulness of years simply because they smoked.

But ask them if they enjoy their pipes.

Their morning and evening pipes are the solace of their days, just as they were the joy of their youth.

And usually they have smoked so many kinds of pipe tobacco that they are good judges of what is what.

Have you found the pipe tobacco that is just what you want?

If not, we would suggest that you try Edgeworth.

We would like you to pass judgment upon it.

Edgeworth may or may not be just your kind. But it has proved to be just the right kind for so many

smokers that we will make it very easy for you to decide whether it is *your* kind.

Simply a post-card containing your address, also that of the dealer to whom you turn for supplies, will cause us to send you generous samples of Edgeworth in both forms—Plug Slice and Ready-Rubbed.

Edgeworth Plug Slice is pressed into cakes, then separated into thin, moist slices. To have an average pipe-load, merely rub a slice between the hands.

Edgeworth Ready-Rubbed is ready to pour right from the can into your pipe. It packs perfectly and burns evenly to the very bottom, getting better and better.

For the free samples, upon which we would like your judgment, address Larus & Brother Co., 42 South 21st Street, Richmond, Va.

To Retail Tobacco Merchants—If your jobber cannot supply you with Edgeworth, Larus & Brother Company will gladly send you prepaid by parcel post a one- or two-dozen carton of any size of Plug Slice or Ready-Rubbed for the same price you would pay the jobber.

back, the master's arm in his great jaws, while his hairy throat rumbled and swelled with mock ferocity—his manner of voicing the fact that every drop of blood in his veins sang with love of the man.

TRAVELING on snowshoes in wet snow which weighed like lead, or slushing through the bush in moccasins, were equally heartbreaking, but John McCleod never wavered in his fight for the lives of himself and his dog. With his belt shortened to grip tighter his increasing leanness, each morning found him cruising the country for game-signs, hoping against hope to strike the trail of a bear driven from its winter quarters by the thaw, or the tracks of returning caribou or moose.

He noticed now, with his stomach clamoring for food, that his endurance was leaving him, that he frequently went "light-headed." Often black spots danced before his eyes, and pin-points and flashes of light marred his vision. The dog, however, with the marvelous vitality of the husky, as yet showed little effect of his scanty rations.

Never did the thought, even vaguely, cross the mind of the man that in his dog he possessed the means of keeping alive until the trail to Nepigon should open and the fishing return. The idea of sacrificing his shaggy partner, the gallant comrade of his mad search for fortune, in whose slant eyes dwelt faith and trust and love, never took shape in his brain. Together they would make their fight for life; together, if must be, they would meet a wilderness death.

At last the beaver vanished, and for two days McCleod and his dog lived on water in which strips of moose-hide had been boiled, after which the ravenous Pard bolted the hide. The pike still avoided the net, and moose-hide bait failed to attract them to his set-lines.

On this diet McCleod had for two succeeding nights returned so weak from the bush that, on the third morning, he remained in his blanket, black despair eating at his heart. He had made a game fight; so long as he could travel, he had kept his nerve; but slow starvation had sapped his strength until now hope, which had once driven him on, was dead. "After I snuff out," he thought, "Pard will die of a broken heart long before he starves."

Then McCleod suddenly sat up in his blankets. "Why didn't I think of it before?" he muttered.

Drawing his knife from its sheath on his belt, McCleod sharpened it, then for an instant held the blade in the sterilizing flame of his fire. Next he bared his right leg and deliberately cut a strip of flesh from the calf. Binding up the leg, McCleod then took a fish line and made his way out over the slush-ice to a hole. With a piece of his own flesh he baited the hook and began to fish.

He had fished for a long time and was despairing of success when suddenly he felt a tug on the line, and an instant later a six-pound pike flopped behind him on the ice.

Food, real food at last! Tears coursed the drawn cheeks of the famished man. Food for himself and Pard! Now

with the fish-entrails for bait, he could catch enough pike to carry them through.

Seven large pike lay on the ice when the fish stopped biting. The dog, back from a hunt in the forest, scenting the fish, splashed eagerly out on the lake.

"Grub, lad, plenty fish now!" cried the man, but the dog, although wild with hunger, waited, sniffing the pike in greedy intakes of the breath, until the master tossed him one. Catching it in the air, he bore the fish ashore, tail high in triumph, and bolted it.

That afternoon McCleod started fishing in earnest, baiting several set-lines and catching three more pike. With his stomach warm with nourishing food, he turned in that night a new man. Hope had returned. For the first time in weeks he thought of the lake of the mine. Now he could stick it out on pike until the ice left the lakes, then fish and shoot his way home.

But to his disappointment, on the following morning he found but one lone pike on his hooks, and only by fishing all day did he manage to pick up another. That was the last—and what he had caught would carry himself and Pard through just three days.

Strengthened for the time being, however, McCleod began to hunt again, but saw no fresh game-signs. On the third night he and Pard finished the last fish. Later, as he lay in his blankets, he realized that it was all over. He was done.

The next morning he slept on long after the sun. There was no breakfast to cook. The fish would not bite. The game had left the country. It was useless to go on fighting.

Ten days, possibly two weeks, of gradual weakening and misery; then he would take to his blankets; and some summer a wandering Ojibway would find a crumbling shack housing scattered bones left by the lynxes and foxes for the wood-mice to gnaw. And down at Nepigon the name of John McCleod would be added to the roster of those the secret of whose fate lies forever locked in the mute solitudes of the North.

TOWARD noon the fighting instinct of McCleod revived, and shortening his belt another hole, he took his rifle and did not return until dusk.

By the time he had boiled his moose-hide and drunk the hot liquor to ease his clamoring stomach, he began to wonder at the continued absence of Pard, who had left on a hunt of his own early in the day. Hours passed, and the man listened anxiously for the familiar whine at the door. What could have happened to the husky, McCleod asked himself again and again. Could he have been drowned crossing a pond on the fast-rotting ice? Had he met wolves? Was his torn body lying stiff, under the stars somewhere, far in the bush?

In his weakened condition the overstrung nerves of the man played tricks with his hearing. Time and again, fancying he heard a yelp far in the forest, he opened the door and listened. Twice he went to the shore of the lake and called, but only the echo of his voice returned to mock him. Then at last McCleod was forced to the realization that his comrade, the puppy he had snatched from





Two constant dangers— We now know that food must protect us against them

How science has revolutionized the selection of the food we eat

IT is now known that there are two dangers constantly threatening our health—not having our body tissues built up and not ridding the body of poisonous waste matter.

Science has discovered that medicine cannot do this for us—that it is our daily food which must supply these great body needs.

But many American meals lack the life-giving elements which build up body tissues and the elements which eliminate waste matter.

A familiar food with wonderful health giving properties

Today millions are securing these needed food essentials by adding Fleischmann's Yeast to their regular diet. For yeast is the richest known source of the necessary water-soluble vitamin.

Fleischmann's Yeast stimulates digestion, builds up the body tissues and keeps the body more resistant to disease. In addition, because of its freshness, it helps the intestines in their elimination of poisonous waste matter. You get it fresh every day.

Laxatives gradually replaced

A noted specialist, in his latest book, says of fresh, compressed yeast: "It should be much more frequently given in illness in which there is intestinal disturbance. . ." This is especially true in cases where the condition requires the constant use of laxatives.

Fleischmann's Yeast is a corrective food, always fresh, and better suited to the stomach and intestines than laxatives. It is a food—and cannot form a habit. In tested cases normal functions have been restored in from 3 days to 5 weeks.

Skin disorders cleared up

Many physicians and hospitals are

prescribing Fleischmann's Yeast for impurities of the skin. It has yielded remarkable results. In one series of tests forty-one out of forty-two such cases were improved or cured, in some instances in a remarkably short time.

Fresh yeast has received general attention from the public since recent scientific tests proved that fresh yeast corrects run-down condition, constipation, indigestion, and certain skin disorders. These original tests were all made with Fleischmann's Yeast.

Fleischmann's Yeast is a pure, fresh food, rich in vitamin, in which it measures up to the high standards set by laboratories and hospitals.

Place a standing order with your grocer for Fleischmann's Yeast and get it fresh daily. Keep it in a cool dry place until ready to serve. Send 4c in stamps for the valuable booklet, "The New Importance of Yeast in Diet." Address THE FLEISCHMANN COMPANY, Dept. 1701, 701 Washington St., New York, N. Y.

Various ways of eating Fleischmann's Yeast

Eat Fleischmann's Yeast plain or spread it on crackers or bread. Try it in water, hot or cold, or in fruit-juices or milk.

Eat 2 to 3 cakes of Fleischmann's Yeast a day. Have it on the table at home. Have it at your office and eat it at your desk. Ask for it at noon-time at your lunch place. You will like its fresh distinctive flavor and



the clean wholesome taste it leaves in your mouth.

Beware of untested yeast-vitamin preparations that contain drugs or other mixtures. Fleischmann's Yeast is your standard of purity and potency. The familiar tin-foil package with the yellow label is the only form in which Fleischmann's Yeast for Health is sold.



Which incense pleases you most?

*Sandalwood? Wistaria?
Violet? Rose? Pine?*

HOSTESSES of the Western World have awakened to what the little hostesses of the Orient have known so long, that there is no more subtle charm than that which comes from fragrant wisps of incense.

But while some like the rich oriental fullness of Sandalwood, other hostesses are partial to the sweetness of Wistaria or to the flowery delicacy of the Rose or Violet; and still others prefer the balmy fragrance of the Pine.

Which do you prefer?

Whichever you prefer, you may have it from your druggist or your gift shop. Practically every department store, too, carries it, so swift has been its spread throughout America.

Try, tonight, the fragrance which appeals to you the most. Or, if you will name it on the margin of the coupon below, for 25c we will be glad to send it to you as your acquaintance package.

VANTINE'S Temple Incense is sold at drug stores, department stores and gift shops in two forms—powder and cones—in 3 packages—25 cents, 50 cents and 75 cents.

**Vantine's
Temple Incense**

Sandalwood, Wistaria, Violet, Rose, Pine

A. A. VANTINE & CO., 66 Hunterpoint Av.
Long Island City, N.Y.

I enclose 25c for the Introductory Package of Vantine's Temple Incense.

Name _____

Address _____

death, had fed and loved and watched grow into the loyal partner of his fortunes, fair or foul, would never again wake him at sunrise with the swift caress of his warm tongue—never again place his great forepaws on his chest while the love which he could not voice shone in the slant brown eyes.

SOMETIME after dawn a muffled whine awakened McCleod from a dream in which a great slate-gray and white husky, bleeding from a score of wounds, was battling with timber wolves.

Fearing his ears had again deceived him, he called: "Pard, is that you, lad?"

For answer there was a smothered yelp and a scratching at the door.

The man flung open the slab door, and Pard limped painfully into the shack, whimpering at each step. Lifting a battered muzzle, he licked the hands outstretched in welcome. On his knees, with arms around the great body, the man buried his bearded face in the hairy neck of his friend, while the bushy tail of the exhausted animal swept slowly to and fro. The husky stretched himself on the floor while McCleod went over head and body with tender hands. To the surprise of the man, although the head and shoulders of the dog were caked with blood, there was no mark of claw or tooth anywhere on him. But the jaws of Pard were badly swollen and lacerated, as if by a blow, and the ribs of one side, though unbroken, obviously pained him in breathing.

Then McCleod removed the balls of ice-hard slush from between the bleeding toes of the exhausted dog. Though he had evidently traveled far to reach home, Pard refused to touch the pitiful meal of boiled moosehide offered him and at once went to sleep. It was clear that he was not hungry.

Of a sudden the man faced the ghastly question: could that be human blood on his dog? Had he met a starving Indian and killed him after a fight?

The welts on head and ribs might have been made by blows from a clubbed gun. Possibly the Ojibway fired on the dog and so brought about his own death. There certainly was no caribou in the country, and McCleod hadn't seen a fresh moose-trail since he had killed the cow. No, caribou and moose were out of the question. Anyway, had it been a moose, a blow from one of his dangerous front feet would have crushed Pard's ribs like slats. Only in the deep snow could the husky, without aid, pull down a yearling or old cow. McCleod closed his eyes, baffled by the mystery.

IN the morning McCleod found, to his joy, a large pike on one of his lines. Part of the fish he offered the greatly refreshed dog, who refused it. Evidently he had gorged to repletion the night before.

When McCleod fastened buckskin socks to Pard's sore feet, the husky soon limbered up his stiff muscles in the adjacent bush, then returned. Limping up to his master, he whined and started off again to the west. Evidently disturbed that his master did not follow, the dog came back and muzzled the man's hand, then again made off in the same direction.

"You want to go back to the fight, lad?" said McCleod, and followed Pard a short distance into the forest. The husky wheeled, saw his master behind him, yelped, and trotted ahead.

Returning to his shack, McCleod slung over his shoulder a bag containing a blanket, the remainder of the pike, and a hunting ax, and taking his rifle, called:

"Lead the way, boy. I'll try to make it. If it's moose or caribou you've got out there, we'll see Nepigon again. If not—well, it makes no difference where we starve."

So the footsore husky, whose injured ribs forced him at intervals to stop with a whimpering cough, followed by a lean-faced trapper weak from starvation, plodded westward through the wet snow over the dog's back-tracks of the morning before.

All forenoon they traveled, the man often through weakness forced to stop and rest. By mid-afternoon the dog began to show traces of excitement, sniffing the air as though he already caught the scent of his kill.

"Close to it, Pard?" sighed the exhausted man, pin-points of light dancing before his eyes as he staggered on.

CCROSSING a ridge, the husky's trail led down into a narrow valley. Then, suddenly pointing his nose at the sky, Pard filled the forest with the call to meat of his savage ancestors. Frenzied with the scent of blood, the dog disappeared ahead. Dizzy and spent, McCleod slowly followed down into a stand of hardwood where a furious yelping marked the place of the kill.

Slowly the man labored on, his legs weakening under him now that the answer to the question which had harassed his thoughts lay but two hundred yards away—the answer which would spell salvation or the torture of a creeping death.

At last he neared the yelping dog, but his eyes and waited, shaken by his labor—upon a blur of scrub and tree-trunks through which a lake showed. He closed his eyes and waited, shaken by his laboring heart. Then he opened them to make out dimly a black mass in the snow. Fearing a trick of the senses, he stumbled on, not daring to look again until he was close to the dog, when the staring eyes of John McCleod rested on the massive carcass of a moose.

There at his feet lay hundreds of pounds of food for himself and his dog. Gone the specter of starvation!

"Pard, you old son-of-a-gun! A two-year-old bull—how did you do it?" sobbed the man, semi-delirious in his joy. "We're square now! D'y'e hear? We're square! I picked you up, a rack of bones, and now you've paid the debt! Partners we are, lad, through thick and thin!"

The man hugged the husky until the sore ribs protested.

Examination of the carcass cleared the mystery as to how the husky had pulled the great beast down without being trampled to death. The bull was hamstrung. The powerful jaws of the dog had bitten through the tendons above both hocks, crippling the hind legs, and his fangs had then ripped the throat of the helpless beast.

With as much speed as his giddy head



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and weakness permitted, McCleod built a fire and dressed the moose, for he could not afford to allow a pound of the precious meat to spoil. Only a fox had found the carcass in Pard's absence; no wolves or wolverines had scented it, and so it had remained almost intact. With a watering mouth, the hungry man roasted a piece of haunch—the first meat he had tasted in weeks—and ate sparingly, for he knew the danger of feasting after starvation; at his side Pard, with a full stomach, gnawed contentedly at a bone.

NEXT day John McCleod's eyes opened on a transformed world. As his strength had ebbed in the lean days now behind, and hope had given way to despair, his senses had gradually numbed. But now as he erected a frame to smoke his meat, life, though secure, seemed sweeter than in the days when he had felt it slowly slipping from him. And Pard, who had saved him—how good it was to see the great dog once more eat his fill!

In order to dry his camp-ground McCleod extended the fire widely, while he

cut his meat into strips for curing. Late in the day, when he had dried out the area he required and scraped away the embers, he carelessly knocked off with the ax-head a piece of a rock-stratum which the fire had bared. Gasping in amazement, he stared at the fractured rock.

Then he did a peculiar thing. Hurrying down to the water, he inspected the shores of the lake. It appeared triangular in shape. Returning to camp, he quickly exposed an area of the surface rock and finally, after using his ax-head vigorously, picked up a fragment which brought from his throat a cry of delight.

"By all that's holy! 'The lake of the shining rock!' Silver, Pard! Native silver! It's the Ojibway's lake! You found it all by yourself, trailing that moose. It's your mine, lad—your mine! We're partners in this claim!"

And dropping to his knees, McCleod hugged the great husky whose warm tongue sought the bearded face, while his loyal heart pounded proudly.

For had he not alone brought down his first moose!

A TIP FROM FOGARTY

(Continued from page 69)

guessed, no doubt, Aunt Ann, what I mean to do."

"As meaning?"

"That I mean to marry Rosa Lind," said Roger seriously, "if she will marry one so unworthy as I."

"Oh, but!" exclaimed Ann Warker. "Of course I know that. I can read you like a book, my boy!"

"I mean to marry her, yes," said Roger, "—but not as Red-line Rose, the bunco woman. That, as you know, could not well be. If I can gain her consent, she shall go abroad for a year or so; I will meet her there, but not as Red-line Rose. So, you see, I do not care to be known to the police as being interested in her."

Ann Warker withdrew the hand she still held extended toward the telephone.

"You do have a sensible idea once in a century," she said grudgingly. "But there are other ways of learning what we want to know. Sergeant Forman, for example."

"Sergeant Forman?"

"Of the police department, and one of my tenants. A fine man and my good friend—I have not raised his rent, you see. Just a moment."

Miss Warker picked up the telephone directory and gave Roger a number.

"Get it for me," she said.

A pleasant female voice answered Roger over the wire and asked him to wait a moment. Sergeant Forman was in and would come to the wire.

"Let me talk to him first," said Ann Warker; and when Roger handed her the instrument: "Is this Sergeant Forman? Forman, this is Ann Warker."

The few remaining words spoken by Miss Warker indicated that Sergeant Forman was indeed her friend. She then spoke of Roger Murchison.

"But I think this is not a business to discuss over the telephone," she declared. "Can you come to this house? At once? Very good; we will wait for you."

"That's the way to do it," she said triumphantly, and in half an hour Sergeant Forman arrived.

The Sergeant was a young man, well set up and almost handsome in the neat police uniform he wore. Murchison, greeting him, found his face vaguely familiar, but this was not surprising; New York policemen are not hid under a bushel.

"I know you by name and face, of course, Mr. Murchison," the Sergeant said, "and I am glad to be of service to Miss Warker—to be of service of any kind," he added meaningly. "Now, I think I know why I am here."

He turned to Ann Warker.

"The graft affair, isn't it?" he asked. "The Red-line Rose business?"

"Just that," said Roger's aunt. "We want to know about it. Is this Rosa Lind girl arrested? What does it all mean? Is—wait; look at this note."

She handed him the scrap of paper telling of Rosa's arrest.

"That's all right," he said. "I told Dan he could drop a word or two. Well, here's the—"

He hesitated, arranging the matter in his mind for easiest explanation.

"Here's the facts," he said: "We've got eight complaints of big bunco work,—got them at headquarters, you understand,—and the big chief put me on the job. The minute I began to look into them, I spotted Red-line Rose's technique. We get to know graft style just as, say, some other fellows can tell a canter from a trot. I bunched the eight jobs and laid them all to Red-line Rose. So then I sent out my scouts."

"Including Mr. Fogarty," said Murchison.

"And Fogarty is not the fool he looks," said Forman. Fogarty is one of my keenest men. He picked up two men, Skink and Tubbel, who had been mixed



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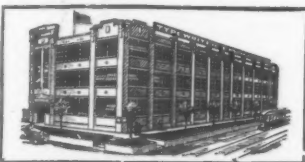
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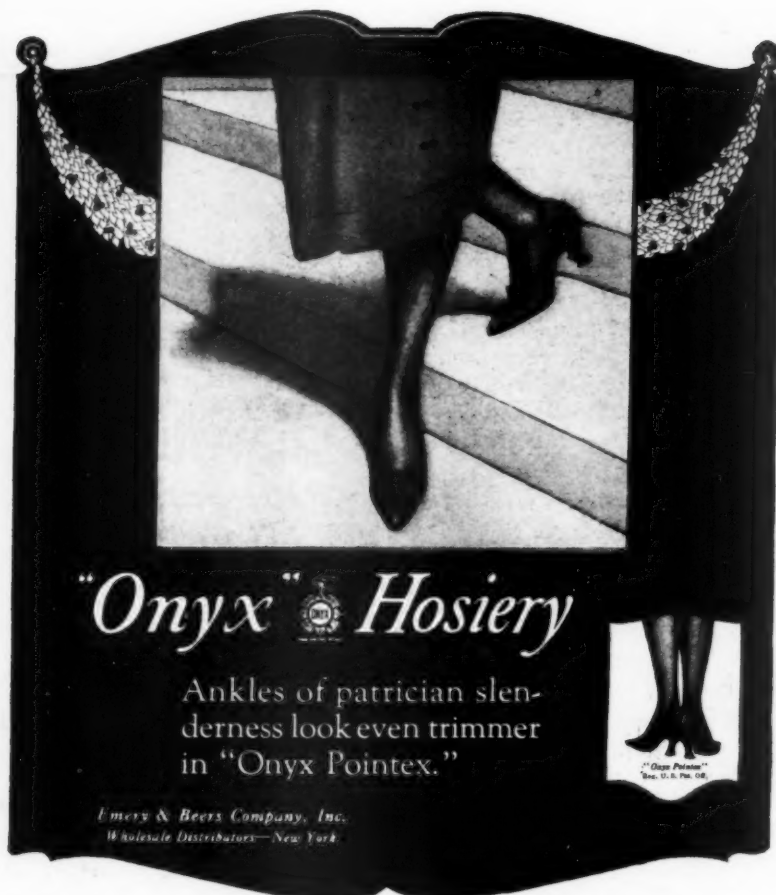
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in all eight cases, and they squealed. They're cheap rats, you know; so they squealed. And from what they said," said Forman slowly, keeping his eyes on Murchison, "I got the tip that this was a sort of gentleman burglar game—a high-life graft syndicate."

He hesitated.

"Go on," ordered Ann Warker.

"All right, then," said the Sergeant. "The tip was that the graft syndicate was being worked from this room. The tip was, Mr. Murchison, that you were the head of the business."

"Well?" asked Murchison.

"Well," said Forman, "Fogarty got the document."

"Document!" exclaimed Ann Warker and Roger Murchison together.

"The contract Mr. Murchison, here, made with Red-line Rose and Skink and Tubbel, setting up a graft syndicate for one year, or longer if necessary. Then we picked up Red-line Rose. I'll say she kept her mouth shut. That's all. I put the whole case up to the big chief and talked it over with him, and the result was that we told Dan Fogarty to write this note. We thought it would work."

"Meaning?"

"Meaning that I knew Miss Warker was your aunt, Mr. Murchison, and that she knew me. 'This man Murchison,' I told the big chief, 'is a millionaire and a Fifth Avenue old-family man, and he's not in this graft business for money. It is some bet or fad or something, and he's gone into it with clean hands—the contract he made shows that; and these three crooks have put one over on him—made use of him for dirty business. Let Fogarty get in touch,' I told the big chief, 'and I'll bet I hear from Miss Warker inside of twenty-four hours.'"

"But why?" asked Ann Warker. "Why want to hear from me?"

"The police are not exactly in the business of giving every old family in New York a black eye," said Forman. "Early and late, we hush up a lot of things about unruly sons and giddy daughters. There are some queer freak notions boiled up in empty heads up Fifth Avenue way, now and then—and on the East Side too, for that matter. If the rights of innocent parties are not hurt—"

HE paused. Ann Warker cast a meaning glance at Roger Murchison.

"But the eight men who were buncoed, Forman?" she asked.

"Be glad enough to get their money back," he said tersely.

"And Red-line Rose?"

"Well, of course," said Forman with a smile, "if the eight men withdraw their complaints, and say they were mistaken, there is nothing left for the police to do but beg the pardon of the lady and her two gentlemen friends and kiss them good-by."

Murchison opened the drawer of his desk and drew forth his check-book.

"On one condition," he said, dipping a pen in his ink. "You are to bring Miss Lind here when she is released from prison."

"Easy," said Sergeant Forman. "But if you are going to make a check, just make it to Miss Warker, if you please. In a thing of this sort—"

"I understand," said Murchison. "And now the amount."

Sergeant Forman drew a document from his pocket and placed it on the table. Neatly typed, it gave the names of the eight victims of the Red-line Rose gang, with the amounts out of which each man had been buncoed. Roger Murchison footed the columns.

"Eighty-two thousand dollars," he said without emotion. "I shall make the check an even one hundred thousand. There may be incidental expenses."

"Taxicab fare, fetching Red-line Rose," said Ann Warker, "and two cents for the stamp on Mr. Fogarty's letter. And I hope, Roger Murchison, this will be a lesson to you. I hope you will end your foolishness here and now and forever."

Murchison blotted the check and handed it to his aunt.

"You have told me often, Aunt Ann," he said, "that I was born a fool and would always be one."

LESS than two hours later Roger Murchison sat at the same table in the same room, but the chairs at the opposite side of the table were occupied by Rosa Lind and the highly ornate figures of Mr. Skink and Mr. Tubbel.

"And none of you was in jail at all?" asked Roger Murchison, a smile bending the corners of his mouth.

"None of us," said Rosa Lind.

"And Sergeant Forman is your brother, and not a police officer?"

"That is the truth."

"And Fogarty and the other spy were merely men Skink and Tubbel picked up in a Bowery lodging-house for this job?"

"Yes, Mr. Murchison."

"I see. I understand now why Forman's face seemed familiar. And the point of the matter seems to be that, under my agreement to double any amount you take from me by crooked means, I owe you one hundred thousand dollars. Is that it?"

Rosa Lind smiled, and Murchison drew out his check-book for the second time that day. He pushed the check across the table, and not inadvertently, let his hand touch the hand of the head of the Graft Syndicate.

"I am much pleased by the efficiency shown," he said; "but how did you ever induce my dear aunt Ann Warker to aid and abet you?"

Rosa Lind, folding the check and dropping it into her purse, drew out another bit of paper. When Murchison picked it up, he saw a neat schedule, in the hand of Miggs the butler, giving date by date some valuable information. It ran somewhat to this effect:

Monday—Mr. Murchison slept two hours.

Tuesday—Mr. Murchison slept five hours.

Wednesday—Mr. Murchison slept heavily six hours.

Thursday—Mr. Murchison slept seven hours and snored.

Roger Murchison returned the paper and smiled again.

"Miss Lind," he said, "I venture to express the opinion that my aunt Ann Warker is a brick. And not," he added, "a gold brick."

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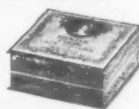


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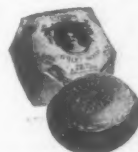
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MAMSELLE CHÉRIE

(Continued from page 65)

Sangree shook his hand, bade him good night, and still rather bewildered, went out into Fifth Avenue. A light drizzle was falling, through which the traffic signals blazed, portentous. The street, the joyous aspect of which he had recently come to consider with a real affection, seemed suddenly to have grown strangely unfriendly. His patrimony—the greater part of it—gone? It was unbelievable. And yet what other interpretation could he put on what he had just heard?

It was too late to call up George Lycett. There was nothing to be done until morning—what, even then, seemed now very uncertain.

David Sangree filled his pipe, a very disreputable Italian briar, but strangely sweet in its counsels, then pulled his hat down over his eyes and strode rapidly north and into the phantom reaches of the Park.

CHAPTER VIII

TO the casual observer it seemed that Alicia Mohun's argosy, with all sail spread, was heading for the Port of Dreams, where with anchor down in safe harbor, she would rest at last from her ventures along the uncharted social sea.

John Chichester had spoken in very certain terms, and following an old-world custom which had been relegated to the dust-heap of other social antiquities, had asked her permission to address his attentions to her daughter. Mrs. Mohun had, of course, with becoming reservations, assented and had professed her willingness to do what she could to prosper his suit. She had advised Mr. Chichester that it would be better if he deferred his definite proposal to Cherry herself for a while—at least, until the experiences of her first season in society had rounded off some of the sharp edges of her exuberance and immaturity.

Alicia Mohun raised her pretty eyebrows and laid her rose-petal fingers along John Chichester's coat-sleeve.

"Oh, don't think I'm apologizing for Cherry's unreflecting infatuations for the foibles of the day—"

"My dear Mrs. Mohun—"

"These are the heritage of her unfortunate generation. Cherry merely does what others do. If she didn't she would be distinctly out of everything."

"Oh—of course."

"But what I do want you to understand, Mr. Chichester, is that her apparent indifference to your attentions, her preference for the companionship—may I say it?—of boys and girls of her own age, is born not of dislike for you personally, but of an embarrassment, even awkwardness, in the society of one who suggests a larger view of life. She *does* like you, Mr. Chichester, very much. She *always* speaks of your roses so gratefully; and she *does* dance with you frequently, doesn't she?"

"Not nearly so much as I would like."

"She will, as she knows you better, as she learns the high motives which actuate you."

"I hope so."

"I'm sure of it. But I counsel you not to be discouraged by the insouciance of youth—you can't reproach her for that, can you? Just try to be patient with her—and kind. She will respond in time."

Alicia Mohun laughed prettily as they rose—then whispered at his ear: "And remember that I am your ally."

"I will remember," said Chichester.

This conversation had taken place in the picture-gallery of the Chichesters' house on Central Park, where Cherry, much to her chagrin, had been invited to lunch with Mrs. Chichester. The guests were only Cherry and her mother, and in any other household the gathering would have been most informal, but at the Chichester house even the entering of a door was attended by ceremonies.

The Mohuns, mother and daughter, had been shown in and announced in faultless cockney, to where the great lady, sibilant in black silk and jet beads, rose from the red damask of her gilded chair, heavily leaning on her cane, and greeted them.

Her cordiality was tinged delicately with condescension, as a lofty mountain, which she resembled not a little in other respects, nods among its clouds. To Alicia Mohun, who had long scrambled through the foothills to lesser peaks, she wore an aspect of serenity which seemed already to take the visitors into its keeping. She gave them her plump fingers and indicated chairs at either side of her which were placed swiftly by a shadowy male in black who vanished immediately.

ON the whole, Cherry behaved very well, in spite of the fact that the somber magnificence was depressing. And though no word had been uttered by her mother as to the motives which lay behind this hospitality, Cherry was not too stupid to realize that she was there to be inspected by the old lady as the object of John Chichester's matrimonial intentions. Her first impulse was to say something shocking which would break the ice of this glacial atmosphere—or forever congeal it; but with a generous impulse, quicker even than the first, she considered the dilemma in which she might place her poor mother, whose attitude during the preliminaries of the conversation filled her with a bewildered if slightly amused admiration.

Fortunately, John Chichester entered at this moment, and luncheon was announced. They went into the lofty room with its huge gray fireplace which had been brought from Italy of the Renaissance. The food, Cherry realized, was not nearly so good as that she could get at the Ritz; but to Alicia Mohun it was nectar and ambrosia. The service was as perfect as three men could make it, two in livery, and a third, the shadow

who had placed the chairs, in black. Now definitely determined to be upon her good behavior, Cherry talked gayly enough with her hostess and host, submitting even to Mrs. Chichester's questioning with a demureness which was very charming.

After luncheon they saw the pictures in the ballroom-gallery, one of the first, as Mrs. Chichester explained, that had been built in New York. And then the old lady took Cherry back into the drawing-room and bade her sit beside her while she questioned. She was not such a terrifying old lady after all, when one got behind the crust of her reserve. Cherry even felt a little sorry for her, with her mountains of flesh, her asthmatic state-lines and her game leg, injured for the remainder of her pampered existence in this sumptuous tomb.

ALTOGETHER it may be said that Cherry made an excellent impression upon the great lady, though she had suffered something in the accomplishment. For the Mohun ladies in their machine were hardly beyond the shadow of the great porte-cochère when Cherry threw open the windows of the car and fell back on the cushions.

"Gee whiz! Muzzy, give me air!" she gasped.

"Cherry!"

"I'm suffocated with the odors of sanctity. Why don't they open the windows and let some of the royal purple out into the blue sky?"

"Cherry, you're incorrigible!"

Her mother's favorite invective, but now it found her daughter calmly lighting a cigarette without even the saving grace of drawing a curtain.

"Say, Muzzy, I'd *perish* in a place like that. Don't you feel sorry for the poor old thing? I wonder if she has a cork leg. And the chins get bigger as they go down—"

"My dear child, you mustn't be so critical. Mrs. Chichester was hospitality itself, and I think she admired you very much. I was so afraid you'd ask for a cigarette."

"I wanted to. But you *did* look so pathetic—I hadn't the heart. But five minutes more, and I'd have *exploded*!"

Alicia Mohun sighed. "I wish that you would look upon the larger aspects of life with more soberness," she said.

"I will when I have to, darling," said Cherry, patting her mother's gloved hands playfully. "But I did behave nicely, didn't I?"

"Yes, my dear, very nicely."

"I tried very hard. But it's used me up. Phew! I feel like going on the loose."

"Please, Cherry!"

"Oh, just a drive with Jim."

"I can't see how you can go to a luncheon in a house like that and then go out with a person like this Mr. Cowan—a nobody, a—"

"Sh! You mustn't call Jim names."

"Cherry! When will you learn reason?" she gasped.

Cherry looked straight before her, frowning.

"I've made a martyr of myself to please you. Now you mustn't object to my doing something to please myself."

Mrs. Mohun did not reply and they reached the house in silence. A moment

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later she heard Cherry phoning to the odious Cowan.

With a sigh Alicia Mohun took off her gloves and hat, laid aside her coat and sank into a chair by the fireplace as she reflected upon this latest and greatest social triumph of her career. Of course, the purpose of the luncheon had been perfectly understood, except perhaps by Cherry herself, who had merely accepted the invitation because her mother had insisted upon her doing so. And there was not the slightest doubt that Mrs. Chichester had given her approval of Cherry. The match was already a thing accomplished. All that remained was to bring Cherry to the point of agreeing with her.

The smile faded at Alicia Mohun's lips, and a tiny shadow appeared at her brows, fled before the recurrence of the smile and then definitely remained. Cherry would have to be reckoned with, and at once. Of course, she was almost too young to understand what a marriage with John Chichester would mean to her.

The frown on Alicia Mohun's brows deepened, though she rubbed it away again and again, with her fingers. She didn't like Cherry's acquaintanceship with this Jim Cowan, who was, so far as she could understand, a person of no importance. But Cherry could be obstinate when she chose—and her acquaintanceship with this man seemed for some reason to be one of the things which she now chose to be obstinate about.

But now that Cherry's plans for the afternoon were made, her mother dared not bring the matter to an issue. Another day would be better for that—tomorrow, perhaps. And so, dissembling, her pretty voice called softly to Cherry as she went down the stairs for her drive.

"Are you quite warm, darling? You know, there's the Carringtons' dinner-dance tonight. The dinner's at eight. Be sure to be home in time to dress."

"All right, Muzzy. Good-by." Cherry was down the stairs, skipping gayly, and out at the door.

Alicia Mohun closed and locked the outer doors of her rooms, and slipping on a pink silk *peignoir*, sat before her three-angled mirror and taking several round boxes of cosmetics from a drawer of her dressing-table, began that intricate process of facial regeneration to which she turned whenever she had a doubt or a difficulty.

But the wrinkle remained. She would have to stop taking the little difficulties of life so seriously.

The ritual before the mirror lasted an hour, and then she bathed and slept.

IT was dark when Mrs. Mohun awoke.

Through the partly opened window she was aware of street-sounds, the rattle of a taxi, the roar of the distant L. newsboys calling. Hazily she tried to make out what it was that they called, but the gibberish was unintelligible, and she dropped off to sleep again, to be awakened by the knock of her maid on the door, telling her that it was time to dress for dinner. The maid entered, switching on the lights, and Mrs. Mohun arose from her couch, blinking sleepily at the pink-enameled clock.

"Has Miss Cherry come in?" she asked.

"No, madam."

"It's getting late. There is hardly time to dress, even now."

Mrs. Mohun dressed slowly,—she had no engagement for the evening,—with anxious glances at the clock. It was already nearly half-past seven, and the Carringtons' dinner was at eight. Cherry frequently came home late and dressed in a rush, but had never committed the unpardonable sin of cutting a dinner-engagement. Jim Cowan! Alicia, gazing in her cheval-glass, saw the tiny wrinkle at her brows suddenly appear, deeper, more portentous than ever. Cherry was with Jim Cowan and quite oblivious of the passage of time. Perhaps—

"One moment, Lillie," she said suddenly to her maid. "I must phone."

In succession she got the houses of Cherry's intimates, the Macklins, Genie Armitage, the Townes, but none of them had seen Cherry or heard from her.

SLOWLY Mrs. Mohun turned away, trying to conceal her anxiety, which as the hands of the clock indicated ten minutes to eight, became very real indeed. Cherry was thoughtless, frivolous, gay, but she had always shown a sense of obligation in her social engagements. As eight o'clock struck, Mrs. Mohun began to fear that an accident had happened—always a possibility when one considered the speed at which Cherry drove. But surely some one would have phoned. Her absence was difficult to understand, unless— What was it Cherry had said? Alicia recalled the abominable words about "going on the loose?" Could she really have intended to cut the Carringtons' dinner and dance for Jim Cowan?

As Alicia Mohun's own dinner was announced, she went down and sat at the table alone. She never expected her husband until she saw him, and so his absence was not unusual; and Jack, of course, was never to be depended upon. She went through the formality of pretending to eat, while she listened for the sound of Cherry's voice in the hall; but at last having no appetite, she left the table and went upstairs, after telling the butler that when Cherry came in, she was to go at once to her mother's room.

All the joy of her triumph of the afternoon was gone. She was very much disturbed, for with the recollection of Cherry's words and the manner in which she had said them, Alicia Mohun no longer thought of the possibility of an accident. Cherry was staying from home purposely, to spend evening as well as afternoon with the man her mother so much disliked. It was incredible, and yet what else could her mother believe? Further telephoning revealed nothing—even to the Carringtons, whose house she called up with a white lie, announcing her daughter's sudden indisposition.

There was nothing for it but to wait; she got into a dressing-gown, turned on her table-light and picked up a magazine. But she could not concentrate her thoughts upon the printed page, and lay most of the time listening intently, crossing a dozen times to the head of the stairway at fancied sounds.

It was curious, also, that she had not heard from her husband; for when he did not come home, he usually sent word

where he was to be. She would have liked to talk with him tonight about Cherry—and about Jack too, who, she had heard from Cherry, was drinking more than was good for him. Alicia remembered, rather definitely now, conversations that she had had with her husband when she had deprecated the idea that anything was wrong with either of the children. She was ready tonight to admit that perhaps she had been mistaken—a large concession indeed from one of Alicia Mohun's nature. Why didn't Jim come home? Never that she could remember in recent years had she so much wanted to talk with him.

The silence of the house oppressed her, and yet there was nothing that she could do but wait. She resented the gayety of the note of the pink-enameled clock which daintily struck the hours in succession—ten, eleven, twelve. But she had dismissed her maid and resolutely remained awake with the determination not to undress or go to bed until Cherry returned. Cherry should reckon with her for this. The girl must be severely talked with, disciplined, if necessary, by her father. Too much depended . . . Exhausted with her thoughts, she dropped off to sleep.

ALICIA MOHUN awoke suddenly and started upright, aware of some one in the room beside her. All the lights were ablaze, and she saw that it was her son.

"Jack!" she gasped. "How you frightened me!"

"Did I, Muzzy? Sorry."

She was wide awake in a moment, her delicate nostrils aware of his nearness.

"Jack!" she gasped again as she realized.

"Aw'fy sorry woke you, Muzzy. Saw lightsh, came in. Fact is, Muzzy, I've got to have some money."

She was staring at him, but he passed her and threw himself into a chair. Jack had always respected the sanctity of her own room too much to show himself before her in this condition.

"Money, Jack?" she said with a quiet note of reprobation.

"Oh, I s'pose you think I'm drunk. Well, I'm not. I'm all right—qui' a' right. Just li'l party, Muzzy. Need a hundred or so—vance on 'lowance."

"Jack! You're not—yourself. Please go out—at once."

"Oh, I say, Muzzy. Not fair. Sober's judge, honest. Wouldn't come into *this* room drunk. Now, would I, Muzzy? Too much respec'. Just need a hundred or so—li'l party—nice people. Very nice peop'. Never go with anybody but nicesh peop'. Always do what'm told. Never go with anybody but nicesh peop'."

Alicia Mohun was looking at him in dismay and disgust, all the faculties which she usually possessed for avoiding the unpleasant, for eliminating the disagreeable, at a loss in this situation which was new to her. This was not her son Jack who sprawled in her pretty chair, but a strange young man whom she had never seen before. It was with a shock that had in it some of the elements of retribution that she awoke to the fact that she had seen very little of him lately—never at breakfast, which she took

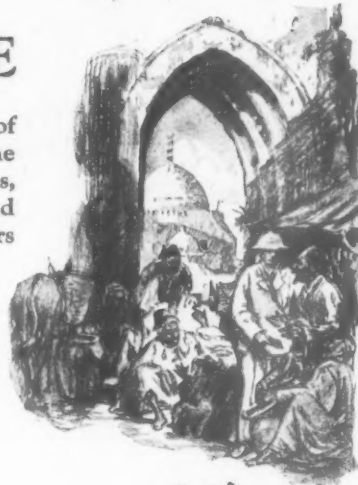
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upstairs, never at luncheon, because she usually took luncheon elsewhere or else had guests at home, and only occasionally at dinner, when he was frequently morose or uncommunicative—or when he came to beg, like this, for money.

"Jack," she gasped in a voice that seemed little like her own, "leave my room."

"Why, Muzzy!"

"I—I have no money to give you. Go, please."

He had gotten to his feet and was already fumbling at the shopping-bag which she kept hanging from the swivel of her cheval-glass.

"Jack, I forbid you." She crossed toward him, but halted, shrinking from the contact. "Don't touch it! Do you hear?"

Louder than she had ever raised her voice before, it startled the boy as much as it did herself, for he turned, the roll of bank-notes in his hand, and looked at her in stupid amazement.

"Muzzy! You're angry—"

"You sha'n't take it. You sha'n't," she cried again, barring the way with her white arms.

MEANWHILE, outside the house in the dark, a man was fumbling with his latchkey. He opened the door and entered at last, closing it noiselessly behind him. Then he straightened and looked about him like one who has entered the wrong house by mistake. For a moment he stood stock-still, listening; then breathing heavily, he took off his hat

and coat and laid them very carefully on a chair near by. His high forehead shone pale under the hall light, and a wisp of moist hair streaked downward across it to his brows. He walked to the foot of the stairway, looked up toward the light on the upper landing, listening again. He might have been a burglar, for all the sound he made; but his motions were those of one bewildered, and the deep shadows under his brows gave the stare from his eyes a singular intensity. He stood leaning upon the balustrade for a moment, his head bent, and then with an air of making a decision, staggered up the stairs, gripping the baluster-rail as he rose. Midway up the flight he paused, for a sound of voices came from Alicia Mohun's dressing-room, and at the top landing a listening servant fled before him. His wife's voice and Jack's! It took all of his courage to walk the few steps that remained to the open door, but he stood, in a moment, swaying on the threshold.

Wife and son saw him at the same instant, both too intent upon their controversy to note details of his appearance. "Jim!" the woman appealed with a wild gesture toward their son. "Forbid him to take it."

"Oh, I say, Dad—jus' a li'l vance—"

"He's taking my money—against my will," she broke in. "He's drunk—beastly. Make him go, please."

Her husband had stumbled forward into the room and leaned heavily on a chair.

"Money," he muttered stupidly,

"money!" And then he made a sound in his throat like laughter.

She started backward, staring, as her look passed to her husband, lingering, distended in horror at his appearance. "Why, Jim—wh-what is it? What's the matter?"

"There's no more money. Nothing!" he whispered hoarsely.

"Jim! I—I don't understand. What do you mean?"

"There's no more money—for Jack—for any of us." His color was ghastly as his pale glance flickered before hers a moment and then turned away. He bent his head as though for her reproaches, and fell rather than sank into a chair, burying his face in his hands. She ran to him, her white hands like moths fluttering.

"I—I don't understand. Tell me!"

"I've failed. Mohun and Company has failed," he groaned.

She straightened above him, staring at the bank-notes which had dropped from Jack's nerveless hand upon the rug, her slender fingers, as though from force of habit, passing over her white brow into the burnished hair.

"Why, what is it you're saying, Jim?" she asked faintly.

He raised his head until his eyes met hers.

Until she looked again into the haggard eyes which seemed to be staring unseeing, beyond her, she could not believe. Then she swayed slightly, catching at the mantelshelf. All her world, the very floor under her feet, seemed to be falling away.

"Tell me—tell me!" she heard herself saying.

"Where's Cherry?" muttered Mohun thickly.

He started up, one hand groping.

"Why," he gasped, "I can't—can't—"

In horror Alicia stared. "What is it, Jim? Your face—"

With a last effort Mohun strove to keep erect. Then he toppled sidewise upon his chair, rolling heavily to the floor, where after a futile effort of one arm, he lay motionless.

The rush of calamity had been so swift that even now Alicia Mohun stood dumb and helpless with fright. But she dropped at last to her knees beside him, touching his cold hands and calling his name, looking with terror at his twisted face, while Jack, his brain clearing, rushed to the telephone.

The next installment of this remarkable novel by the author of "The Bolted Door" progresses to an even more dramatic situation. Be sure to read it in the forthcoming February issue.

THE KISS OF JUDAS

(Continued from page 36)

I unlocked the door of her charming little salon. She pointed to the evening paper and an easy-chair.

"Please make yourself comfortable for five minutes," she begged, looking back from the threshold of the inner room. "I shall just let Annette help me out of my gown. Then I will give her the jewel-case and she shall call for you."

She nodded and disappeared. I stood for a moment looking after her. The door was closed softly. I heard her call to her maid in the farther apartment.

Those next few seconds seemed to beat themselves out in my brain, charged with a strange and almost amazing significance. I am convinced that I acted from impulse. There was nothing definite in my mind when from behind that closed door I conceived the sudden idea which prompted my action. I crossed the floor of the sitting-room and opened the door which led on to the corridor. There was no one in sight, and it seemed to me that fewer of the electric lights were lit than usual. I stood there, every nerve of my body riveted upon an attempt at dual listening. I listened for the return of Mrs. De Mendoza, and I listened for the opening of either of her doors. Presently what I had divined might happen, came to pass. The door of her bedroom, in a line with the one behind which I was lurking, opened. I peered through the crack.

Annette, the maid, a trim, dark figure, had crossed the threshold. She stood for a moment listening. Then without even glancing toward the sitting-room, she walked swiftly along the corridor and turned to the left towards the lift and staircases. In a couple of stealthy strides I too had reached the corner, and peering round, watched her movements. To my surprise, she passed the lift and turned the other corner of the corridor toward the staircase. As soon as she was out of sight, I followed.

As I reached the farther angle, every light was suddenly extinguished. There was a little gurgling cry, the sound of a heavy fall upon the soft carpet. In a second or two I was on the spot. I could

dimly see where Annette was lying, gasping for breath, apparently half unconscious. By her side lay the jewel-case, open and empty.

I DID nothing for a moment toward raising any alarm. I bent over the girl and satisfied myself that she was not shamming—that she had, in effect, been subjected to a certain amount of violence. I glanced at the transoms over the doors of the bedrooms opposite. There were three of them between where I was and the turn to the lift. Suddenly the farthest door was opened, softly but not stealthily. A figure appeared, and leaning down, threw a pair of shoes upon the mat. I suppose that I was dimly visible in the semi-gloom, for the man suddenly left off whistling and turned in my direction.

"Hullo, there!" he called out.

I drew from my pocket the little electric torch which I had been keeping in readiness, and flashed it upon him. It was my friend Mr. Stanfield, in striped yellow and white pajamas, a cigarette between his teeth, his feet encased in comfortable slippers.

"What the devil are you doing out there?" he demanded. "And who's turned the lights out?"

"Better turn them on and you may see," I replied. "There's a switch close to your door."

He found it after a moment's fumbling, and stared at us in amazement. The maid, with her fingers still to her throat, had recovered sufficiently to sit up, and was leaning with her back to the wall, ghastly white and moaning to herself. The empty jewel-case told its own story.

"Jerusalem!" Mr. Stanfield exclaimed breathlessly. "A robbery!"

"Ring your bell," I directed.

He disappeared into his room for a moment, leaving the door open. Presently he reappeared.

"I've rung all three," he announced.

"Then the wires have been cut," I answered, pointing to the register lower down, which had not moved. "Go to the lift and see if you can get anyone."

He was gone for about half a minute.

I leaned down toward the girl, who was beginning to cry.

"Did you see who attacked you?" I asked.

"No!" she sobbed. "All the lights went out suddenly. Some one came up from behind. I never heard a sound—just the clutch at my throat and the choking."

"Why did you not wait for me or go down by the lift?" I demanded.

She looked a little puzzled. "I never go by the lift," she replied.

"Why not?"

"Fred, the second-floor valet, generally meets me on the floor below," she explained reluctantly, "and—"

"I see," I interrupted. "But didn't your mistress tell you to wait and go down with me?"

The girl seemed surprised.

"My head is queer," she admitted, "and I can't remember much; but Madame said nothing to me except to tell me to hurry down."

THE silence of the corridor was suddenly broken. Mr. Stanfield reappeared, followed by a little army of servants and the manager.

"Send everyone away except two men whom you can trust," I begged the latter. "Mrs. De Mendoza's necklace has been stolen."

There was a murmur of consternation and excitement. The manager selected two of the servants and dismissed the rest. He posted one by the lift and one by the staircase. I explained in a few words what had happened.

"Do you think the thief has got away?" he asked.

"One cannot tell," I replied. "I want to know about these three rooms."

He glanced at the numbers.

"The farthest one is occupied by Mr. Stanfield," he announced. "The other two are empty."

"You are sure that this one," I asked, pointing to the door close to where we stood, "is unoccupied?"

"Certain," was the confident reply. "Take my keys and see for yourself."

I was on the point of doing so when

Mrs. De Mendoza appeared. She was clad in a wonderful light blue wrapper, and the touch of excitement seemed to add to her beauty.

"My necklace!" she gasped. "Don't tell me that it is gone!"

"Madam," the manager began, "I regret to say—"

"What were you doing, then?" she cried, turning to me. "Do you mean to say that it was stolen while Annette was with you?"

"Annette was never with me," I replied. "She left your bedroom with the jewel-case, without coming near the sitting-room."

"Is this true, Annette?" her mistress demanded.

"But why not, Madame?" Annette faltered. "You said nothing to me about going into the sitting-room. I did not know that Monsieur was to accompany me."

"The girl is telling a falsehood," Mrs. De Mendoza declared angrily.

"Could these matters wait for a moment?" I intervened. "Our immediate task is to try and recover the necklace. I wish everyone to leave this place—except you, sir," I added, addressing the manager, "and myself."

The manager was a person of determination, and in a moment or two the corridor was empty. Mr. Stanfield lingered on the threshold of his room.

"Can I remain?" he inquired. "In a way I am interested, as my room is so near."

The manager waved him back.

"I desire to hear what Sir Norman has to say, alone," he insisted.

Mr. Stanfield reluctantly withdrew. We first of all entered the room opposite to us. It was empty and apparently undisturbed. There was a connecting door on the left.

"Where does that lead to?" I asked.

The manager unlocked it. It led into a similar room, also empty. The room on the other side was Mr. Stanfield's, also connecting. The outlook of all three was onto some mews.

"These are our cheapest rooms," my companion explained. "They are generally occupied by servants, or people of an economical turn of mind."

We withdrew into the first one we had entered.

"Will you lend me that master-key of yours?" I begged.

The manager detached it from his chain and handed it to me.

"If you should be instrumental in recovering the necklace, Sir Norman," he said, "the hotel authorities would appreciate all possible reticence in the matter."

I nodded.

"It is hard to keep anything out of the press, nowadays," I reminded him, "but so far as I am concerned you may rely upon my discretion."

THE few days that followed were filled with hysterical and irritating appeals, complaints and inquiries from Mrs. De Mendoza herself, the insurance company and the management. No efforts on our part could keep the affair out of the newspapers, and the disappearance of the necklace became the universal subject of conversation. A hun-

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dred amateur detectives suggested solutions of the mystery, and thousands of knowing people were quite sure that they could put their hands on the thief.

On the sixth day after the robbery I felt that a brief escape was necessary. I proposed to Mr. Stanfield, whom I met in the hall of the hotel, that we go down to Woking and have a round of golf, an arrangement to which he agreed with avidity. We lunched at the clubhouse, and as on previous occasions, we played a careful and hard-fought game. It was on the eighteenth tee when one of those unexplained moments of inspiration came to me which serve as the landmarks of life. We had spoken of that grim tragedy which had interrupted our first game. I thought of poor Ladbroke lying there with a bullet-hole in his forehead, the maid, Janet, serene and secretive, with the strange eyes and unruffled manner. The memory of these things came back to me as I stood there and it seemed as though my faculties were suddenly prompted by a new vigor and a new insight.

Supposing it had been the maid who had killed the prying stranger! What was her motive? Whom was she trying to shield? Could it be her master? And if her master's name was not Stanfield, might it not be Pugsley? The two men were of the same height and build, and the one thing which Rimmington had always insisted upon was Pugsley's genius for disguise. The pieces of my puzzle fell together like magic, and with them the puzzle of the necklace. I turned back to the tee, and I was suddenly conscious of my companion's intense gaze. His eyes seemed to be boring their way into the back of my head. I knew that something in my face had given me away.

"Your honor," he said tersely.

I topped my drive miserably. My companion's drive went sailing down the course, and he halved the match in a perfectly played four. We walked together to the clubhouse.

"A whisky and soda?" I suggested.

"I'll change my shoes first," he answered, turning toward the dressing-room.

I drank my whisky and soda, exchanged greetings with a few acquaintances and paid my bill. Then I went to look for Stanfield. I might have spared myself the trouble. He and the taxi had alike disappeared. I had to wait while they telephoned for another, and I traveled up to London alone.

THE game was played out in quite the grand fashion. On my arrival at the hotel, I found the representative of the insurance company waiting to see me, and I was told that Mrs. De Mendoza was in her room. Accompanied by the manager, we made our way thither. I think that she was well prepared for what was coming, or rather one part of it. She received us a little impatiently.

"I have been waiting to hear from your firm all day," she said, addressing Delchester. "My jewelers, who valued the pearls, and my legal adviser, have helped to make out my claim. I am anxious to know when I may expect your check."

"I am thankful to say, madam, that that will not be necessary," the manager

announced, stepping forward. "Here is your necklace."

He handed it to her. She stared at it like a woman transfixed. There were no signs of joy in her face. She seemed, indeed, for the moment stricken with consternation.

"When was it found?" she demanded breathlessly.

"About four o'clock on the morning after the theft," I told her.

"But where?"

"If you will come with me," I replied, "I will show you."

I led the way down the corridor to the exact spot where Annette had been attacked, and opened the door of the nearest room. I saw Mrs. De Mendoza start when she saw the heavy bolt which had been fitted to the communicating door.

"I came to the conclusion," I explained, "that the theft was committed by some one hiding in one of these three rooms, and to the further conclusion that the necklace had been hidden on the spot."

"How did you guess that?" she inquired.

"Because the thief made a slight blunder," I answered. "For a single moment, as I stood by Annette's side in the darkness outside, I saw a light flash out through the transom of this room. I must admit, however, I went on, 'that it took me four hours to find the necklace.'"

"Where was it, then?" she asked curiously.

I TURNED up the rug. In one of the planks of the wooden floor was a knot. I took a little corkscrew gimlet from my pocket, bored into it and drew it out. Then I made Delchester push his finger through. There was a hook fastened in the under side of the floor.

"The necklace was hanging there," I told him. "I imagine it would have been found later by some one making a point of occupying this room. As a matter of fact, I believe it was booked for the first week in June."

"By whom?" Mrs. De Mendoza demanded.

"By Mr. Stanfield," I replied. "He is paying a return visit in June, and he appears to prefer this room to the one he is occupying at present."

There was a brief silence. Delchester held out his hand.

"We are very much obliged to you, Sir Norman," he declared. "Our insurance, as you know, expired at midday today. I need not say that it will not be renewed. I wish you all good afternoon."

He took his leave. The manager appealed to me.

"Sir Norman," he said, "there is a great deal in this matter which it is hard to understand. I hope that you will not consider it a case for the police?"

I turned to Mrs. De Mendoza.

"Do you wish to prosecute?" I asked. "There is a certain amount of circumstantial evidence which might be collected."

"Against whom?"

"Against the gentleman whom we have known as Mr. Stanfield."

She laughed scornfully.

"That funny little man who sits about

in the lounge? I would as soon believe that you yourself were the thief, Sir Norman! I have my necklace back, and that is all I care about," she concluded.

THE manager departed, very much relieved. Mrs. De Mendoza beckoned me to follow her to her suite. Arrived in her sitting-room, she closed the door. She had rather the look of a tigress as she turned and faced me. Never was a woman born, of more splendid courage.

"And the epilogue?" she asked.

"I fear," I replied, "that the epilogue must be postponed. It was only today, on Woking Golf Links, that a certain little scene of eighteen months ago became reconstructed in my mind. I saw a motiveless crime explained. I realized by whose hand that bullet might have found its way into Ladbroke's brain, and for whose sake."

"Yet you let him go!" she cried.

"I must admit that he has scored a trick," I said slowly, "but you must remember, or perhaps you have yet to find out, that the world where such a man can live, is a very small place."

"And what about me?" she asked. "From the moment when I heard that you had gone out with him alone, I could foresee what was coming. Yet I was not afraid. I waited for you."

I looked at the necklace and shrugged. "It is hard to leave a hundred thousand pounds," I pointed out, "and so far as you realized, the game was not up. Not a soul in this hotel except myself knew that the necklace had been recovered. Yet you had courage to remain and see the thing through. I admit that."

She came a little nearer to me. The green lights in her eyes were soft. I felt the attraction of her as she meant me to.

"Where I love," she said, "I have courage, and my love has every quality which the devil ever distilled, except constancy. Are you afraid of me, Sir Norman, because I killed a man who—"

"A confession," I muttered.

She laughed.

"No witnesses," she reminded me. "After all, it was you who once said that murder was the easiest of crimes. What you know and what I know will never take me to the dock. Would you put me there if you could, my enemy?"

I drew a little away. Her breath was almost upon my cheek; her lips had taken to themselves the curve of invitation.

"I would put you there without a moment's hesitation," I retorted. "You killed a man in cold blood to shield a murderer and a criminal. The hand of justice is slow, especially where evidence is scanty, but in the end it grips."

She laughed scornfully.

"You speak in ignorance," she declared. "At least be friends," she went on, "until you can drag me to the gallows. I shot him with my right hand."

She held out her left fingers. I raised them to my lips.

"The kiss of Judas," I warned her.

"You will need more than his cunning," she answered.

A new adventure in this pursuit of an arch criminal by a master detective will be described by Mr. Oppenheim in the February issue.

MR. FLINT OF "THE FOOTLIGHT"

(Continued from page 74)

in these calls; some rosy gossamer that had hung over their earlier meetings was wearing thin.

So Janice decided to use stronger methods. She was writing Flint's department one day, when a bright idea seemed almost to click its way off her typewriter without her having thought of it at all.

"Would you mind,"—she turned over her shoulder to the editor, who was reading proof at his desk beside her,—"if I used my name in Lawrence Ballard Flint's department? Just my first name, I mean?"

Lockwood's smile tipped up at the corner.

"You know Lawrence better than I do, nowadays. Is he the kind of man to trust with a young girl's name?"

"Oh, yes," Janice assured him. "Whatever his past may have been, Mr. Flint is now a perfect gentleman."

"All right. Incriminate yourself as far as you like."

So Janice ticked off the first sentence, thinking of Bob's reading it a month later, her lips twitching with anticipatory delight.

For a few moments Lockwood watched her curiously. She glanced up to catch his eyes on her.

"You've set me guessing," he admitted. "Is it a secret? Or why do you want your name in the paper?"

Janice hesitated a moment, then laughed, blushing a little.

"I'm making a man think there is a real Lawrence Ballard Flint and that he is a little interested in me," she admitted.

"To make the other man jealous?" Lockwood's smile was quickly understanding.

"Just a little," Janice admitted. "And to—to keep him interested. Don't you think it is a good way?"

"Very good," Lockwood smiled, adding gallantly: "But I should think it quite unnecessary."

"Oh, I don't know," said Janice frankly. "There are an awful lot of girls in New York."

"Undoubtedly," Lockwood agreed.

So the little paragraph went to press to await Bob's unsuspecting eye.

MEANWHILE, Janice played such cards as she had in her hand. One of these quite unexpectedly explained what had been wrong with her previous methods. She had an expensive box of candy—one of the kind that is all tin-foil and candied rare fruits—delivered at her apartment, bearing Flint's card and arriving in the evening while Bob was calling.

Bob was evidently interested.

"Overtime pay?" he queried, helping himself to a luscious cherry.

"Overtime?" Janice was puzzled.

"Well, I suppose Flint figures in a way that going to the theater all the time is part of your job."

Janice smothered a gasp. So that was why Bob had not respected the writer as a rival!

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After all her efforts, he had been considering Flint's attentions as mainly professional.

"Oh, I hardly think Mr. Flint thinks that," she said demurely. "A man often sends a girl candy just to be—pleasant."

"I suppose so," Bob admitted indifferently, removing the top layer to see if anything more interesting lay beneath.

So that was how matters stood! No wonder Bob had been so acquiescent. Well, she knew now how to make the rivalry progress!

She chose her birthday, which happened to come the next week, as an excellent opportunity to open Bob's eyes, to start the progress. It was an excellent idea she had, but as a matter of fact, it started no progress at all. There never was, during the entire rivalry of Mr. Lawrence Ballard Flint, any real step-by-step progress. It swung in one wild leap from an almost dead standstill straight into the climax.

During an idle half-hour at the office the morning of her birthday, when she and Lockwood had leaned back in their

swivel chairs and munched salted peanuts bought from a boy who came through the building, Janice had asked:

"What kind of flowers do you think Lawrence Ballard Flint would be most likely to send to a girl on her birthday?"

"W-e-l-l,"—Lockwood paused, giving the matter due thought.—"I should think orchids would be rather his style. But if you're the girl, of course, orchids wouldn't fit."

"What kind would he send me?"

Again the editor considered at length.

"Sweet peas, I should think," he said finally, "or lilies-of-the-valley, or little yellow roses."

At noontime she stopped at the florist's, recklessly sacrificing money she was saving toward her fall suit, and left an order for the flowers to be delivered to herself before nine o'clock that evening. She slipped Lawrence Ballard Flint's card into the little white envelope. The price was exorbitant, but she knew that Lawrence Ballard Flint would patronize only a smart florist.

The candy Bob had passed over care-

lessly, but he could not do that with these flowers. For Flint to know and remember her birthday would place him as an unmistakable, purely personal rival. If Bob did not turn jealous at this, she would know there was something wrong. His matter-of-fact air, the feeling of something lacking, the lifting of the rosy gossamer between them, would then be real and she would know it.

She pushed the large bill across the florist's desk with royal recklessness. The amount seemed suddenly insignificant. Perhaps with it she was buying ardor, eagerness. It was expensive for flowers but cheap for romance.

The twosome dinner with which she and Bob were to celebrate her birthday was set for eight o'clock, out of deference to the hot August day. So Janice had plenty of time for a refreshing tub and to change after the feminine fashion from the blue tailored young business woman of *The Footlight* office to a primrose organdy butterfly befitting the Rensselaer Roof.

It was Bob who had chosen the Rensselaer Roof, his instinctive selection of such places as were smart, expensive, exclusive, was a quality which had made him fit so well among Aunt Wilma's friends.

At the Rensselaer Roof the food was delicious, the linen fine, the china thin; the waiters were soft-footed and dexterous. One paid for all this, of course, in his bill; but after a day in a busy office, walking over crossings so hot that one's feet indented the asphalt, the Rensselaer Roof was breezy, sweet-melodied, epicurean—as sense-satisfying as a Mohammedan heaven.

JANICE paused at the entrance while Bob conferred with the head waiter, looking about her with the half-awed, delicious pleasure in such places which a year in New York had not even dimmed. She wondered if she looked well enough to pass muster among the pretty, smart women who sat at these little tables. In the half-shadowed mirror of the closed elevator door she could see her crisp organdy ruffles. She missed something of the dash, the sureness of line which these other women had; she could not see her face shadowed by her lace-trimmed hat—even if she had, she would not have recognized the something there that most of these others had lost: a shy eagerness, an unquenchable youngness. After a year in New York, a year on *The Footlight*, Janice was still like a dewy bouquet, fresh from her mother's garden in Farwell.

At that moment among the many unfamiliar diners, Janice recognized two about to seat themselves at a table near the railing, Bea Pertwee and her brother. With a sudden sinking of the heart, she hoped that Bob would not see them. But he did; she saw him crossing the roof, smiling, his hand outstretched. There was a moment's consultation with the waiter; a table for four was quickly substituted for the small one beside the railing, and Bob was coming back for her. It was evident that he was pleased to have met the Pertwees, that he thought a foursome would be gayer than a twosome.

Bea's attention was all for Bob, with

an occasional word thrown to Janice, like a morsel flung to an importunate puppy begging beside the table. Janice set herself to entertain Bert, a rather silent young man with a bristly pompadour. She laughed gayly at his obvious humor, but under the gayety she was tasting her jellied bouillon and thin toasted cheese-wafer through the salt of disappointment. She did not like the Pertwees and felt as childishly hurt as a little girl unexpectedly cheated out of a birthday party.

Suddenly Bea noticed the magazine her brother had laid beside his plate.

"Oh, you've got the new *Footlight*! Let me see if Harrison Leeds' picture is in it. He told me it was going to be in the September number."

The advance copy had been lying on Janice's table with an utterly false air of casualness for several days, but Bob had not happened to pick it up. Bea flipped through the rotogravure section.

"There he is! Isn't he stunning?"

BOB was about to explain Janice's connection with *The Footlight*, but Bea gave him no opportunity. She had been visiting a cousin at Lake Placid, where Harrison Leeds had been working on a picture and had become very well acquainted with him. He was going to call on her as soon as he came back to town. Cousin Rosina knew everybody worth while on the stage and the screen; she, Bea herself, had met a great many of them and fully intended to meet more. So she chattered on, flipping through the magazine pages. She saw that she was making an impression on Bob and became more casual with each new celebrity she claimed.

"Oh, that's Bobby Shumaker, an awfully nice chap, but a rotten dancer!" Or: "Cousin Rosina knows her awfully well, and she says she never pays her dressmaker's bills."

She had passed the rotogravure section and was skimming past the department of the Man About Town when Janice raised wide and innocent eyes.

"You haven't happened to meet Mr. Flint, have you, Miss Pertwee?"

Miss Pertwee hesitated.

"Lawrence Ballard Flint," Janice further explained in a tone to suggest that even Miss Pertwee could hardly aspire to such a distinction. Bea glanced down at the familiar department.

"Let me see—I believe we did. There were so many new people there. He's—"

"Tall and dark?" Janice queried promptly.

"Yes, he is." Bea met Janice's guileless, admiring eyes. "Oh, yes, I remember now. I danced with him several times one night." She read a line or two of his department. "He's terribly attractive," she explained patronizingly to Janice.

"Yes," said Janice, "he is, very."

"Oh, have you seen him?" Bea was taken aback.

"Janice is assistant editor of *The Footlight*," Bob explained. "Flint takes Janice to the theater a good deal," he added proudly.

Bea, suddenly finding herself beyond her depth, repeated, "Yes, he's really quite decent," in a bored tone, and laid the magazine down.

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During a brief wait for the entrée, Bob picked up *The Footlight* and began to read aloud Lawrence Ballard Flint's department. In the opening sentence came the shock:

"As Janice, my one consolation for New York in August, was saying this afternoon—"

Bob stopped short in surprise. It was not exactly pleased surprise, Janice instantly knew, but after a brief moment he decided to treat the matter as a joke.

"My one consolation for New York in August," he repeated in tones of exaggerated suspicion. "Janice, what is the meaning of this? Are you double-crossing me? Have you another fiancé on the Salt Lake Line? How dare Lawrence Ballard Flint refer to you as his consolation?"

Janice only laughed. At the arrival of the entrée—a Rensselaer special, aromatic with chervil, garnished with tarragon—Bob dropped the subject, but through the rest of the dinner, Janice felt its presence. It might not have been evident to less sensitive eyes, but she saw a decided shade of preoccupation as he talked with Bea, caught one or two quickly averted glances at herself, and knew that Bob was thinking unpleasantly of Lawrence Ballard Flint. She thought once or twice a shade uneasily about the flowers she knew were waiting at home. One could overdo a thing of this kind so easily.

When the dinner was at last over and they all rose to leave, Bea turned to Janice.

"Can't you have tea with me some afternoon?" she asked.

Her tone was indifferent; her manner indicated that this was the most casual afterthought; but Janice, being a woman, easily translated the flapper code. She knew that it had occurred surprisingly to Bea that Janice might possibly prove a person worth cultivating.

Then she and Bob rode home, to find Lawrence Ballard Flint's flowers.

THEY were on the table in the hall beside the elevator, a huge white box tied with gold-tissue ribbon.

"Whee!" Bob whistled through his teeth. "Somebody draws some million-dollar flowers!"

Carelessly, Janice glanced at the address.

"Why, it's for me!"

And there, in a nest of snowy tissue, was a gray lacquered basket filled with little yellow roses. So unexpectedly lovely were they that for a moment Janice almost forgot that she had sent them herself. She looked at the engraved card.

"From Mr. Flint! Isn't that nice of him! And to have remembered my birthday!"

She glanced up at Bob. The quick side-glance was enough to show her that he was displeased. He followed her into the elevator in grim silence. It was not ten yet, and fortunately Betty had not come in. Humming a gay, careless little tune, Janice switched on the low light and set her flower basket on the living-room table. She stood back to admire it.

"Aren't they sweet?"

There was a heavy, portentous silence.

"Why—why, Bob, what's the matter?"

"I want you to drop this Flint—right now," he said in a level tone. It was the old delicious tone of possession, of mastery. But Janice's answering thrill was strangely absent.

"Why?" she asked coolly.

"I'm not going to have my future wife being made ridiculous in public print."

"There wasn't anything ridiculous—"

"I hope I was broad-minded enough not to mind your going to the theater once in a while with this fellow, but when it comes to his remembering your birthday—a hanger-on at stage doors!"

"The theater," said Janice, "is a very small part of Mr. Flint's work. He devotes just as much time to other arts."

"The other arts—bah! A full-grown man who spends his time going to concerts and art-exhibits! Art!"

Janice drew one of the little roses from the basket and looked intently at its pale yellow softness.

"Don't you think it's rather nice," she asked mildly, "for a man to have some appreciation of music and pictures?"

She knew well enough, after all these months, that Bob did not. His views on art were not new to her, but for the first time it occurred to her to resent them.

"Music and pictures! That's a fine job for a life-sized man!"

SUDDENLY, Janice forgot that Lawrence Ballard Flint was a mere phantom to spur on Bob. He seemed suddenly real to her, as real as the quick anger that rose to his defense.

"Mr. Flint is a journalist," she said. "It happens to be his present business to write about the arts, so he knows about them. When it is his business to write about Chinamen or the stock-market, he knows something about Chinamen and the stock-market."

"A fine business for a man!" Bob repeated scornfully.

"It's the finest business on earth for a man! It takes him all over the world; it teaches him something about almost everything; it makes him understand things and people that lots of people can't understand; it makes him kind and sympathetic and tolerant. He has to have a sense of humor, and courage and imagination—"

Bob stopped her peremptorily.

"So that's the way you feel about Flint, is it? Well, I'm grateful to you for letting me know. I'm not running in any competition. You can make up your mind right now which of us you're going to drop."

"You mean that you—that—I—"

"I mean that you are more interested in Flint than a girl who is engaged to one man has any right to be in another. I'm not going to shilly-shally along with it. You can make up your mind: either you drop Flint, absolutely, or you drop me."

"I can't let myself be dictated to in this high-handed way, you know, Bob."

"I have a perfect right to dictate in this matter. You will drop Flint, absolutely, right now."

For several moments Janice only stared at Bob. This was the masterfulness she had once adored, this the jealous anger she had deliberately roused. Here was the climax she had planned, right at her hand. It would be the simplest thing to

handle it as she had intended. A little gentleness, an easy promise, and this angry man would be a lover again, the more ardent for their quarrel.

But Janice did not speak the easy promise. Instead she drew off the little diamond-and-platinum ring she had been wearing and held it out across the basket of roses. There was no resentment, no anger in her face—only queer puzzlement. She was wondering with a cool distaste why she had ever wished to be engaged to Bob at all.

LONG after he had gone, Janice sat with *The Footlight* in her lap, open at the "As Janice, my one consolation for New York in August, was saying—" But she was not reading the printed page; she was looking blindly through it and listening to a silent argument.

"You'll be sorry in the morning," one silent voice was insisting. "Bob is a good man, honest, energetic, ambitious, generous—you are in love with him. Bob is a good man—you'll be sorry in the morning—"

"No, I won't be sorry in the morning—I won't be sorry—ever. I'm sorry we quarreled about nothing, but I'm glad it's all over. I'm not in love with Bob any more. Maybe I never was, really; maybe I've changed. I don't know. Bob is a good man, but he's not my kind of good—we'd bore each other after a while—we've begun to even now—some girl like Bea will be better for him. This is why I've kept thinking there was something lacking between us—it was lacking with me. It's too bad we quarreled, but I won't be sorry in the morning. I won't be sorry—ever. I don't know what is the matter with me, but I'm glad it's over—I'm glad it's over."

Back and forth the silent argument raged, but the silent accuser could never wear down the one bewildering unanswerable answer: "I'm glad it's over."

After a long time Janice laid down the magazine and went to fill with water the porcelain cup in the bottom of the flower-basket that had caused all the trouble. For a moment, she held the little yellow roses tenderly in her hands.

"Mr. Lawrence Ballard Flint," she thought, smiling whimsically, a little ruefully, "you're nobody at all, and yet you've cut out a real man! I pretended you were everything I wanted a lover to be, and then I could see that Bob wasn't! You and I wouldn't bore each other, ever. We'd laugh at things that Bob wouldn't think were funny and talk about things Bob wouldn't think were interesting, and have friends that Bob wouldn't think it was worth while to know. I guess I've fallen in love with you!" She lifted the little yellow roses and buried her face in their fragrance. "Oh, Mr. Lawrence Ballard Flint—I do wish you were real!"

THE hot September sun beat against the partly lowered green shade in *The Footlight* office. It was Saturday noon, nearly closing-time, and David Lockwood dropped the black hood over his typewriter and leaned back in his swivel chair, drawing down his sleeves. His assistant was still at a bit of work she was trying to finish. Two or three



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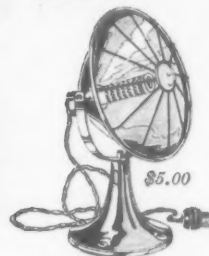


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times Lockwood looked over at the bent head. Twice he opened his lips to speak; twice he closed them in silence. It was evident that the usually self-possessed editor of *The Footlight* had something he wished but was finding difficult to say.

"There! That's done!" Janice dropped her pencil, pushed back the pile of papers. "I suppose you're engaged for this afternoon, aren't you?"

Janice glanced up in surprise. It was the first time the editor of *The Footlight* had vouchsafed any interest in his assistant's outside-of-office plans.

"No," she said. "I'm not. I don't know just what I am going to do."

Again Lockwood hesitated. Then he mustered up courage and said:

"I've been sent a couple of tickets for a kind of country fair *de luxe* somewhere up on Long Island. Would you care anything about going out? That is, unless you see so much of me here that you couldn't face doing overtime?"

Now, this invitation might have been the most casual inter-office courtesy in the world, merely a pleasant time-killer for two unoccupied people. But there

was no reason for a casual time-killing suggestion to turn an experienced man of slightly over thirty suddenly as awkward, as eagerly fearful as a blushing boy. Janice glanced across and met his eyes.

"I'd love to go," she said. And she wondered if he could hear the words above the amazing thundering of her heart. For in that brief glance Janice suddenly knew why Lawrence Ballard Flint had seemed so real, why she had always pictured him as smiling, with a friendly, quizzical, crooked smile that tipped up a little at one side.

SOULS FOR SALE

(Continued from
page 47)

every other way, she was so revolutionized that what had hitherto seemed to her odious was beginning to seem admirable. What had been her evil was her good, and her good her evil.

Beauty, grace, magnetism she had regarded as curses, temptations, things to be disguised, withheld, resisted. Now they seemed to her blessings, obligations, treasures to be invested, and dispensed. Her sense of duty faced about. If God made her pretty, it was because He delighted in beauty and wanted it known. He did not grow flowers in cellars. He was not afraid to squander the sunshine.

If the art of mimicry was a God-given gift, it must be meant for use. She had acted once before a camera, there in the desert. She had felt the possession of an alien agony. She had shot tears from her eyelids. She had brought tears to the eyes of strangers. She had tasted the sweet poison of vicarious suffering. She was an actress by divine intention.

Yet she sat in a dark room and watched other people's pictures flow by. It seemed wrong, wicked, cruel.

Everybody is infected with the futile virus of criticism, and Remember grew vigorous in her opinions and her comments. Some of the opulent actresses and the lady-killing actors would have winced to hear the projection-room snickering or hooting at their pictures.

Remember had little vinegar in her blood. Her criticism took less the form of satire than of dispute. She kept saying: "If I had done that scene, I would have done thus and so." She was educating herself unconsciously in the complex technics of acting, learning dramatic analysis and synthesis.

Fools who know nothing about acting

speak of it as if it had no intellectual element. They think that the common enough ability to write impudent scurrilities about the brainlessness of actors is a proof of brains.

Remember came to see how difficult a science, how bewildering an art, the mimetic career requires. She would learn the anguishes of self-control and self-compulsion that must be undergone when the actor's soul squeezes itself into the mold of another character. She could already see how many ways there were of thinking—of holding hands, of looking love or hate, of kissing, crying, laughing, rising up and sitting down.

She was mad to act.

CHAPTER XXVII

AMONG the processions of types that marched past Remember's eyes as she sat at her magic window in the projection-room—among the innumerable American types, good and bad, rich, poor, foreign, native, rural, urban, saint, gambler, the aliens of every clime and age and costume, the animals and the birds, the plunging horses of the cowboys, the lions, the wolves, the rattlesnakes, went many children in rags and tags and velvet gowns.

In the brief first versions known as "rushes," when the man with the numbered slate stepped into the picture and was photographed, she caught glimpses of the actors as they broke the spell of the scene for a moment: the weeping heroine began to powder her nose, or to giggle; the laughing comedian frowned at something gone wrong. But the children always romped. The child that wept laughed the minute the director ended the scene with the sharp word, "Cut!"

On the lot she saw the children, and sometimes she was permitted a few moments on a stage where the players were working into the lunch-hour. The children were always happy. The mothers were with the little ones. The older ones had to go to school four hours a day, and they had classes on the lot. Going to work was going to play. They lived an eternal fairy-story. They did not have to wait till bedtime to coax a worn-out fable from a dismal parent. They went through great adventures in magic-built castles. They had an infinite number of new toys and new games, and greatest bliss of all, they had importance.

Remember learned that some of them earned astounding sums for their parents. Trained dogs and parrots, lions and tigers also gained salaries, but they were kept in strict discipline. The children played games and were paid for it.

Remember thought of little Terry Dack and his secondhand express wagon, helping his mother to pack her bundled wash home to bitter toil. He had a dismal life on the desert's edge, illumined only by his own unconquerable fancy and his dramatic gifts. His was the home life of multitudes of American children. He had far more of mother's love than most of them. Yet the stage child and the movie child were spoken of with pity!

Remember decided that it was well worth a child's while to accept such pity as a rebate on the fat blessings of such a life. She wrote Terry's mother urging her to come to Los Angeles without delay—to beg, borrow or steal the necessary funds, to seize the chance to rescue the divine child from poverty and oblivion, and to earn luxury by giving the world the sunshine of his irresistible charm.

She had not meant to let anyone in Palm Springs know where she was, but she took the risk of embarrassment rather than risk the boy's future. Her motherhood had transplanted itself to that other child, and his welfare was vital to her. As a final inducement she promised to introduce Terry to the management of her own studio. She permitted the impression that she was a rather important person on the staff.

And the day after she mailed the letter, she lost her job.

THE tide of hard times had engulfed the studio where she was engaged. All but two or three companies were laid off. The laboratory force was reduced to a skeleton. She went home one night and did not come back.

And now the dark-room that had come to be a prison cell was as dear a home as the shut cage of a canary that cannot get in again. She was homesick for the many-windowed gloom, for the black wet chambers with the big vats of "soup," where the endless tapes of minute pictures were developed, the lurid red rooms where the printing machines chattered, the drying rooms where the vast mill-wheels revolved with their cascades of film. The gates of the "lot" were closed against her, as the gates of Eden against Eve.

"THE FEMININE SLANT"

That is what most business men are seeking on the things made to sell. Just where the feminine slant led in a certain case is the theme of a delightful story in an early issue by

FANNIE KILBOURNE

There was no pleasure in lying abed of mornings. There was no comfort in omitting the stampede to beat the time-clock. The pay-day came around no more. She had debts to absolve for clothes no longer fresh. She had tomorrow's and next week's hunger to dread. The girls at her house were equally idle, and their hospitality lost its warmth for lack of fuel.

They tried to make the best of idleness. They wore the records to shreds, and danced together all day long to pass the time away. Young men who had no money to spend on excursions came to the house of evenings and helped to dance away the tedium.

It became a commonplace for Remember to jig about in young men's arms. She learned to dance. She learned to play a little golf, a little tennis. She even gained a bit of familiarity with the saddle at the home of an actress who owned horses and had built a riding ring on her estate when she was flush, and was glad now to have her friends exercise themselves and her stable.

Remember went also on her first beach picnics. If she did not learn to swim, she learned at least to add the paganism of the ocean to the paganism of the cañons, the deserts and the palm-blown plains.

The Pacific coast civilization surpassed all the other coasts in its return to the pre-figleaf days. On the leagues of sand variously named Coronado, La Jolla, Laguna, Redondo, Hermosa, Santa Monica, there was as much care-free, clothes-free gayety as in the Marquesan and Tahitian realms that Frederick O'Brien found or made so Elysian with his fragrant pen.

THE first day of Remember's visit to the shore was well-nigh fatal. As the automobile in which she rode threaded the long and narrow lane of Venice, a woman darted across the path dragging a child by the arm. Remember thought at first that the mother must be fleeing from a fire that had surprised her in her tub, and that in her confusion she had put on her husband's undershirt and nothing else. But hundreds of others were seen hurrying from that same fire in much the same costume.

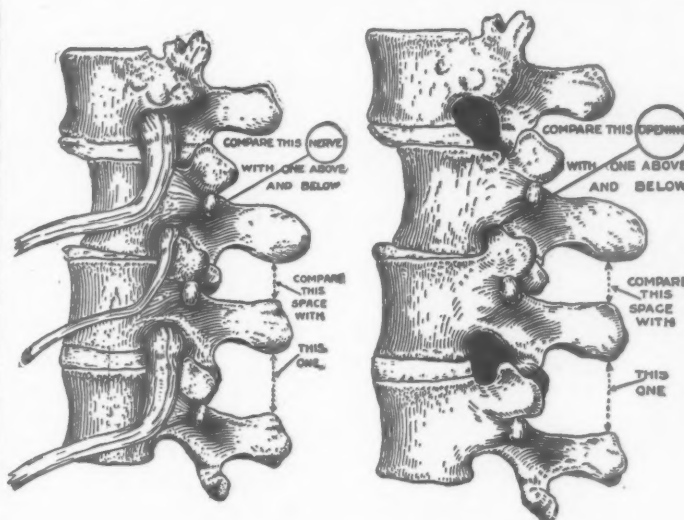
The girls she was with parked the car in a little blind alley ending at the walk along the sand. Remember had come at last to "where the mountains meet the sea." The blinding blue desert of the Pacific, almost as calm as the sky it met and welded with the twin blues, overwhelmed Remember for a moment with vastitude. Then she caught sight of the margin where the waves broke lazily in long corkscrewing lines of green fringed with white froth. Among the billows and in front of them swarming human midges leaped, swam, ran, walked, squatted, burrowed, flirted, lunched, nursed babies, slept.

The sand was abloom with umbrellas, a monstrous poppy field. Along the endless walk miles on miles of little shops were aligned with piers thrusting out into the ocean, bridges that led nowhere and were loaded down with pleasure-shops, giant wheels, insane railroads that made a sport of seasick terrors, every ingenuity

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for making happy fools of the mob bent on unbending.

As far as the eye could see along the vast scythe-blade of shore, a populace seethed, all so lightly garbed that if Remember had met any one of them in Calverly, she would have fainted or fled. She was stunned. But the enormity of the multitude gave the exposure an impersonal aspect. It was like looking into a can of fishing worms wriggling unclothed in anything but a light band of color.

As she stood benumbed, Leva nudged her and said: "Hurry up; we mustn't miss a minute."

Remember mumbled: "Am I expected to go in there like that?"

"Of course!"

"Not me! Not today! No thank you!"

She could not be persuaded. She hardly consented to sit on the sand and wait. While she waited, her eyes were whipped with such sights that she was anesthetized by shock. Fat mothers, fat fathers, scrawny matrons and skeletal elders paraded among infants and boys and girls in all stages of growth, and none of them was decently clothed according to any standard Remember knew.

Here and there Apollos and Aphrodites moved in perfection of design and rhythm, their beauty and their grace appallingly revealed. Remember bent her head, averted her eyes, felt sick at the stomach. But the coercion of the throng was more potent than any other influence. She began to think herself a ninny to be the only one out of step with this army. She compelled herself to look without flinching, and, she hoped, without curiosity.

BY the time Leva and her company came leaping out to join the revel, Remember was a little injured. Seeing her friends, whose good sweet souls she loved, was a fresh shock, but she survived it and envied them their ability to fling off their solemnities with their other garments.

Before the afternoon had slipped into twilight, she was able to laugh when she saw them playing ball with sunburnt young men of their acquaintance. When they gathered about her and sat in a crisscross of brown and white legs, she had to reconcile herself to South Sea standards. The sky was too bright to stare at all the time. They ate peanuts and popcorn and introduced her to that wonderful meal composed of a roll split open like a clam and stuffed with cleft sausage, dill pickle, lettuce and mustard, a viand so irresistibly good that it lent a grace to its shameless name, "hot dog."

A few days later Remember might have been seen in a bathing suit of popular brevity, substituting a general coat of tan for the forty blush-power she had abandoned. She was not sure whether she was a lost or a new-found soul, but she was sure that she was an utter changeling from the remorseful girl who stole shamefastly out of Calverly to hide herself from human eyes.

She was already publishing her bodily graces to the world, and she was devoured with ambition to give her soul also entire to the millions. She wanted to attitudinize her soul upon a film as public and as huge as the sky and compel mankind to

watch it and admire. For her soul and her body were her own now. No, they had gone beyond even that. Her soul and body were the public's. She was committed to their fullest development into such joyous acrobatic agility and power that they should give joy and a delightful sorrow to the public. For which the grateful public would pay with gratitude, and fame and much money!

CHAPTER XXVIII

IN swimming, dancing, mountain-climbing, horseback-riding, motoring, singing, laughing, days and nights reeled by. But Remember was not content.

Gayety as an ether against the pangs of idleness was a heavy, an almost nauseous drug. She looked back on her earlier existence at home as a slothful indolence at best, a waste of gifts, a burying of genius in a napkin and the napkin in the ground where it must rot yet never lift a flower from its corruption. To be busy, to achieve, to build her soul and sell it—that was her new passion. She gave up all thought of going home to Calverly. She would never be content with village life again.

One day she loitered through Westlake Park, and watched the visitors feed the wild fowl that grow tame there. The man or child who had bread-crumbs for largess was almost mobbed. Overhead the chuckling seagulls made a living umbrella, careening and dipping to hook the morsels tossed in air. From every quarter birds of various pinion gathered, swerved, darted, flung backward on wings that were both brake and motor. About the feet others scampered or stalked, pecking, gobbling. On the nearer ripples ducks, terns and geese moved like little ferryboats; coots scooted, and swans black and white thrust up their long throats from the reedy banks where they moored.

Remember loafed about until she grew too weary to stand. Her despondent soul drifted as lazily as the swans, and felt almost as willing to beg for bread. She sat down on a bench on the Seventh Street side, and by and by was hailed by a sturdy Midwestern voice.

"Well, as I live and breathe, if it aint Miss Steddon!"

"Why, how do you do, Mrs. Sturges!" It was a mid-aged woman who had been a member of her father's church and had gone West—Remember had now to say, "come West"—because of her husband's lungs.

Remember's first impulse was to welcome anyone from home. Her second was to fear anyone from home. But Mrs. Sturges was already squeezing her broad person into the remaining space on the bench.

Her life in this Babylon had not changed her small-town soul, body, dress or prejudices.

Remember's wits scurried in vain to bring up protecting lies. Mrs. Sturges was too full of her own opinions and adventures to ask Remember any embarrassing questions, beyond a hasty take-off for her own biography: "And how's your father and your mother and your whole family? All well, I hope. And so you're

here! Well, well! Well, as I was sayin' yest'day, everybody on earth gets to Los Angeles sooner or later. It's a nice city, too, full of good, honest, plain—o' course, those awful moving-picture people have given the town a— But there's plenty of real nice folksy folks here; and the town growin' faster than—well, as I was tellin' my husband last week, it takes all kinds to make a world, and the Lord may have had some idea of His own when He made movies; of course, I enjoy seein' 'em. You just can't help enjoyin' the terrible—but the people that make 'em—well!

"Such stories as they do tell about their—why, that Hollywood is just a plague-spot on the earth. The gent'man we used to rent from—we own our own home now—or will soon when a few more installments are—And the prices here—my dear, oh, dear! But he said that friends of his who had rented their homes to movie people—why, would you believe it, some of those cowboys! One day on the ranch, next day earning a thousand dollars a—and buying jewelry on credit. And then the women—little pink ninnies that don't know enough to come in when it—they get fortunes for just making eyes at the camera and they rent nice respectable homes and hold—well, orgies is the only word—orgies is just what they are.

"It's a sin and a shame, and if something isn't done about it—why, young girls flock there in droves, and sell their souls—it's simply terrible. I declare it makes my blood run cold just to—don't it yours?"

"I don't believe it," said Remember.

Mrs. Sturges flared up. There is nothing one defends more zealously than one's pet horrors.

"Don't believe it? Well, that's only because you're so innocent yourself—speaks well for your bringing-up—so strict and all—you naturally wouldn't believe folks could be so depraved. But if you'd heard what I've—why, it's true as gospel. My husband had it from a man who knows whereoff he speaks. They sell their souls for bread, and as the Bible says, their feet lay hold on—well, you know. Any girl that's too honest to pay the Price don't get engaged—that's all—she just don't get engaged. Of course, there may be some decent ones, old ladies that play homely parts and—but if a young girl wants to succeed in that business she's just got to—oh, dear, that's my car. There's not another one for half an—they run out to our place only every—good-by, I hope to see you again soon.—Wait, hay, hay!"

And she was gone into the infinite purileus of Los Angeles. She caught her car, and it slid off gong-banging and bunting a passing automobile out of the way with much crumpling of the fender and the vocabulary of the driver, but no fatality—which was unusual.

REMEMBER did not regret the abrupt departure of Mrs. Sturges. She was glad of the woman's breathless garrulity.

It had not only left her with her secrets intact, but it had given her a hint. Mrs. Sturges had substituted faith for facts, and had spoken with that earnestness which is more convincing than evidence. Remember accused herself of

blindness instead of charging Mrs. Sturges with scandal. She felt that the alleged wickedness had escaped her notice because she was too stupid to recognize it.

But Mrs. Sturges' accusations had the same perverse effect as her father's Jeremiahs. His sermon had made her long to see Los Angeles. Mrs. Sturges' had suggested an answer to her own riddle.

She wanted to act. She was determined to act. She needed money. She must have money. It had never occurred to her that a pretty woman is merchandise.

She sat on the bench and noted with a new interest that some of the men who passed her and stared at her had question-marks in their eyes. Up to now she had shuddered at the vague posing of this eternal interrogation. She had not taken it as a tribute of praise or as an appeal for mercy, but as a degrading insult. Now she thought of it as a kind of sly appraisal, a system of silent bidding, auctioneering without words—the never-closed stock market of romance and intrigue. She grew grim as she meditated. The Price was only a vague phrase, but she was ready to pay it, whatever it was. But to whom?

SHE brooded a long while before she thought of a shop to visit. She smiled sardonically as she remembered the Woman's Exchange at home, where women sold what they made: painted china, hammered brass, knit goods, cakes and candies. Well, she would sell what God had made of her for what man might make of her.

At the studio she had met the casting director one day when the commissary was crowded with stars in their painted faces and gaudy robes, and with extra people portraying Turks, Japanese, farmers, ranchers, ballet-dancers, society women, Mexicans. He had been introduced to her as Mr. Arthur Tirrey, when he asked if he might take the vacant seat at their table, where she sat with Leva and another girl.

He was an amiable and laughing person with an inoffensive gift of flattery. When he learned that all the girls worked in the laboratory projection-room, he had exclaimed:

"Why waste yourselves in that coal-cellar? I'll put you all in the next picture."

The others had not taken him seriously. Indeed, they had no ambition to be photographed. Remember had often wondered at the numbers of pretty women she knew who had no desire to have their pictures published. It balanced somewhat the horde of unpretty women who had a passion for the camera.

After the lunch she had learned who Mr. Tirrey was, and what the duties were of a casting director. It was he who said to this one or that one: "Here is a part; play it, and the company will give you so much a week."

He was the St. Peter of the movie heaven, empowered to admit or to deny. He was the man for her to seek. He had seemed a decent enough man, and he had looked at Remember without insolence. But you could never tell. Mrs. Sturges had it on the best authority that the only way to success in the movies was—"the easiest way."

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REMEMBER took a street-car home. She was glad to find the house empty. Leva and the others were out on a cañon hike.

Remember pondered the costume appropriate to her new errand. She was going to lure Lucifer, and she was afraid that he would be too sophisticated for her. But her problem was solved for her by its simplicity: she had only one very pretty gown, and so she put that on.

She studied herself a long while in the mirror, since her eyes and her smile must be her chief wardrobe, her siren-equipment. She practiced such expressions as she supposed to represent invitation. They were silly, and they made her rather ill. The face in her glass was so ashen and so miserable that she borrowed some of Leva's warmest face-powder and smeared her mouth crudely with the red lip-stick.

It was a long journey to the studio, with three transfers of street-car. She reached the lot late in the afternoon just before the companies were dismissed and the department forces released.

The gatekeepers knew her, smiled at her and let her in. She went to the casting director's office and found him idly swapping stories with his assistant. He spoke to her courteously, and when she asked if she might see him a moment, he motioned her into his office, gave her a chair, closed the door and took his own place behind his desk.

The telephone rang. He called into it: "Sorry, Miss Waite, that part has been filled. The company couldn't make your salary. I begged you to take the cut, but you wouldn't. Times are hard, and you'd better listen to reason. You'd have had four weeks of good money, and now you'll walk. Take my advice next time, old dear, and don't haggle over salary. All right. Sorry. Good-by!"

He turned to Remember and started to speak. The telephone jingled again. He had a parley with a director who could not see a certain actor whom Mr. Tirrey was urging as the ideal for the type. They debated the man as if he had been a race-horse or a trained animal. Tirrey spoke of him as a gentleman, who could wear clothes and look the part. He had been miscast in his last picture. He was willing to take three hundred a week off his salary because his wife was in the hospital and one of his daughters was going away to boarding-school.

This was a discouraging background for Remember's siren-scenario. But she was determined to carry out her theory. Mr. Tirrey's eyes looked her way now and then as he listened to what was coming in through the wire.

When he looked away, Remember in all self-loathing adjusted herself in her big chair to what she imagined was a Cleopatra sinuosity. She thought of her best lines; she secretly twitched up her skirts, and thrust her ankles well into view. She turned upon Mr. Tirrey her most languishing eyes, and tried to pour enticement into them as into bowls of fire.

She pursed her lips and set them full. She widened her breast with deep sighs. Mr. Tirrey seemed to recognize that she was deploying herself. He grew a little uneasy. Before he finished the

The Red Book Magazine

telephone talk, his assistant came in to say that another of the directors had decided to call a big ballroom scene the next day, and fifty ladies and gentlemen must be secured at once.

"He wants real swells, too," the assistant said. "He says the last bunch of muckers queered the whole picture."

Mr. Tirrey groaned and said: "Get busy on the other wire." He took up his telephone again, used it as a long antenna and felt through the agencies for extra people. He advised several actors and actresses to lay aside their pride and take the real money rather than starve.

His patience, his altruistic enthusiasm for the welfare of these invisible persons, touched Remember with admiration. She could not see where or when this Samaritan could find time or inclination to play the satyr.

He was a bit fagged when he finished his last charge upon the individuals and the agencies. But he was as polite to Remember as if she had been Robina Teele.

"What can I do for you?" he asked abruptly.

"I want a chance to act."

"What's your line?"

"Anything."

"Anything is nothing. What experience have you had?"

Remember had not come here to offer her past but her future. She was suddenly confronted with the fact that all actors must offer themselves for sale—not the pretty women only, but the old men, too, and the character women.

So Remember had to grope for experience and dress her window with it. And she had had so little she lied a little as one does who tries to sell anything:

"I was with the company that Tom Holby and Robina Teele played in. I took the part of an Arabian woman. Mr. Folger, the director—er—praised my—er—work."

"Well, he knows," said Tirrey, "but he's not with us, you know. Have we your name and address and a photograph outside in our files?"

"No."

"Well, if you'll give them to Mr. Dobbs, with your height, weight, color of eyes and hair, and experience, we'll let you know when anything occurs. Everything's full just now, and we're doing almost nothing, you know."

He was already implying that the interview was ended. She broke out zealously:

"But I've got to have a chance. I'll do anything," she pleaded. He looked sad but rose and shook his head.

"I'm sorry, my dear. I can't give you jobs when there aren't any, now can I? I'll introduce you to Mr. Dobbs and he—"

TIRREY moved toward the door, to escape from the cruelty of his office, but a frenzy moved her to seize his arm in a fierce clutch. She tried to play the vampire as she had seen the part enacted on the screen by various slithy toves.

"I'll pay the price. I know what it costs to succeed, and I'm willing to pay. You can't refuse me."

She could hardly believe her own ears hearing her own voice, though her pride

in the acting she was doing lifted her from the disgust for the rôle.

He looked at her without surprise, without horror, without even amusement, but—also without a hint of surrender. His only mood was one of jaded pity.

"You poor child, who's been filling your head with that stuff? Are you really trying to vamp me?"

The crass word angered her:

"I'm trying to force my way to my career, and I don't care what it costs."

Tirrey's sarcastic smile faded:

"Sit down a minute and listen to me. A little common sense ought to have told you that what you've been told is all rot. But suppose it wasn't. Suppose I were willing to give a job to every pretty girl who came in here and tried to bribe me. Do you know how many women I see a day? A hundred and fifty on some days; that's nearly a thousand a week. I happen to have a wife and a couple of kids, and I like 'em pretty well, at that. And how long do you suppose my job would last if I gave positions in return for favors? And if you won me over, you'd still have to please the director and the managers and the author and the public. How long would our company keep going if we selected our actresses according to their immorality?"

"It's none of my business what your character is off the lot—except that your character photographs and a girl can't last long who plays *Pollyanna* on the screen and polygamy outside.

"Just suppose I gave you a job for the price you want to pay and then the director refused to accept you, or fired you after the first day's test. What guarantee could I give you that you could hold the job once I recommended you for it? And what would the rest of the women on the lot and off it do if such a business system were installed here? What would the police do to us?"

"There's a lot of bad girls in this business, and there's a lot in every other business and in no business. But put this down in your little book, my dear: there's just one way to succeed on the screen, and that is to deliver the goods to the public.

"Forget this old rot about paying the Price. Good Lord, if you could sit here and see the poor little idiots that come in here and try to decoy me! I get it all day long. Your work was pretty poor, my dear. I congratulate you on being such a bad bad woman. But I'm immune. You'd have failed if you had been the Queen of Sheba. Now go on outside and tell Mr. Dobbs your pedigree, and we'll give you the first chance we get. How's that? A little bit of all right, eh? You're a nice child, and pretty, and you'll get along."

He lifted her from her chair and slapped her shoulder-blades in an accolade of good fellowship.

She broke under the strain and began to cry. She dropped back into her chair and sobbed. It was good to be punished and rebuked into common decency by the way of common sense. Tirrey watched her and felt his overpumped heart surge with a compelling sympathy. He resolved to move her up to the head of the army of pretty girls pleading for opportunity—the bread-line of art.

When he had let her cry awhile, she began to laugh, hysterically at first, then with more wholesome self-derision.

Her eyes were so bright and her laughter so glad that they impressed a director who pressed his face against the screen door. Remember had been so deeply absorbed in her plan that she had not observed the other door standing wide open save for its screen.

Tirrey asked the director in as he opened the inner door for Remember's exit. But the director checked her with a gesture. Tirrey presented him as Mr. Rookes. He had to ask Remember's name. She gave it from habit as Mrs. Woodville.

Mr. Rookes said to Tirrey:

"I've got to let Perrin go. She's no good at all, no comedy, no charm. She's supposed to play a village cutie and she plays it like Nazimova's *Hedda Gabler*. This young lady looks the type. She's very pretty, nice and clean-looking."

Remember was aghast at being so discussed; yet it was thrilling to be considered. She did not even note that the director had neglected to demand the Price. It was almost more embarrassing to have him demand her experience.

Her story improved with repetition:

"Oh, I played a bit for Mr. Folger. He said I was wonderful."

"Was it comedy?"

"Well, not exactly. It was character."

She was trying to talk like a professional.

"Would you mind giving me a test?"

She was not quite sure what he meant, but she was there to pay any price, so she said:

"I'd love to."

"It's late," said Rookes, "but I'm desperate. Come right over to the set before the electricians get away."

HE hurried her through the screen door, across the grass to one of the vast warehouses, and there under a bombardment of grisly lights, with a camera aimed at her point blank and under the eye of various men in overalls, he asked her to smile, to turn her head slowly from side to side, to wink, to laugh aloud, to flirt with an imaginary man, to indicate jealous vexation at a rival.

Rookes was fretful over the snarl this small rôle was causing in his big picture. The delays and shifts it had compelled had already added several thousand dollars to the expense account, since the overhead and all, totaled nearly three thousand dollars a day, even with the recent cut in salaries.

He assumed that Remember knew the rudiments of her trade, and could use the tools of it, which were her muscles. He gave her no help, painted no scene, did nothing to stimulate her imagination.

In the desert, among the famine-wrung people in costume, under the fiendish sky, it had been easy to lift her eyes in prayer and to weep. She found out all of a sudden how much harder it is to be natural in one's own clothes than to play a poetic rôle in costume, how much harder it is to be funny than to be tragic.

She could not smile at command. Her lips drew back in a grin of pain. Her wink was leaden. The camera caught what her face expressed, and it expressed what she felt, which was despair. She

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had her chance and she was not ready for it.

She knew that if she had been droil and mischievous, the director's face would have reflected it as Mr. Folger's eyes had grown wet when she wept in the desert. But Mr. Rookes was merely polite; the camera man was mirthless; the props and grips stole away.

The test was short. Mr. Rookes said: "Very nice. Ever so much obliged. Mr. Tirrey will let you know how it comes out. Thank you again. Good night!"

And now she must find her way out. Tirrey was just driving away in his car as she sneaked through the gates, feeling that her paradise was gone again.

For once her gloomy forebodings were justified. And ever after, she trusted her gloomy forebodings, often as they fooled her. The next day passed with no summons from the studio. But the mail brought her a letter from Mrs. Dack.

It was written in such script as one might expect from a hand that clutched a cake of soap or a hot boiler-handle or scrubbed clothes against a washboard all day, six days a week. It said:

Dear Mrs. Woodville. I was awful glad to get your letter. Been meaning to answer it but trying to fix up my affairs so I and Terry could come up to your city. Yesday I was to Mrs. Reddicks and she said she had a telegram for you but had no address and so could

not forward it. It said your mother was so worried not having had no answer to her letters she was coming out on the first train and would reach Palm Springs day after tomorrow. Hopping to see you soon either there or here,

Mrs. P. DACK.

P. S. Terry sends you lots of love.

Remember was petrified. Nothing could stop her mother from coming. The first blaze of joy at the thought of seeing her again was quenched in the flood of impossible situations her presence would create.

Alone with her skyish ambitions, her contempt for village standards had been sublime. But that was in the absence of the village. It made an amazing difference in the look of her new ideals and practices, that they must be submitted to a mother's eyes.

Her mother did not know Los Angeles. But then, Remember did not know her mother. Daughters have not all been mothers, but all mothers have been daughters.

Remember's courage turned craven before the wilderness of her problems: unemployment, poverty, ambition, Terry to launch, and her mother to educate.

Remember Steddon's strange career comes to some of its most dramatic episodes in the next installment—the forthcoming February issue of *The Red Book Magazine*.

THE PARROT

(Continued from page 55)

gracious recognition of his master's guests. He brought in flowers, a special bouquet for Miss Thorpe's room, which he himself picked in the little garden that he tended. He brought perfect order out of the chaos of scattered clothes and half-unpacked traveling-bags in Colonel Thorpe's room, which Ting Fu had scandalously neglected.

Meanwhile there was the luncheon to prepare, which Mrs. Stanleigh wished to be of an especial sumptuousness in amends for the dinner of the night before, hastily contrived by her own inexperienced efforts. Wung Lo needed no urging to his best achievements in the cook-house. He went pridefully about preparing various chefs-d'œuvre of his culinary art, for in Colonel Thorpe he recognized an inveterate traveler of the Far East who was very likely a connoisseur of Oriental delicacies. There were chickens to be killed and plucked, and the rice to be prepared. Mysterious processes went forward in the cook-house, from which streamed the thin, luminous smoke of Wung Lo's charcoal fire. And again and again would come the interruption of his mistress' voice, calling from the house. He lived only to serve her. He would promptly drop knife or ladle and sally forth at an absurd, diminutive trot, with always the same patient, reassuring response like a refrain upon his lips:

"Me comee, Miss Stanleel! Me comee!"

Under the tree Ting Fu smoked and dozed and at intervals contemplated the blue sky. And Wung Lo's hut in the rear, surrounded by high bamboo palings,

continued to present a black and empty doorway to the outer world, devoid of sound or sign of life.

Luncheon time had come at length, and the first of Wung Lo's delicacies had been brought to the table, where they had promptly evoked Colonel Thorpe's outspoken praises. He had not tasted such cooking in years. The little fellow who so deftly presented the bewildering dishes at his elbow was a marvel, and no mistake. He regretted aloud that he was saddled with that lazy young Canton rascal of a Ting Fu, heir to all the Chinese vices, but with no accomplishments whatsoever beyond a slippery ability to be always out of sight and out of call—smoking or indulging in continual siestas.

Wung Lo, deaf to the talk, alert, placid, expressionless, served and carried away, or stood immobile behind his mistress, attentive to her command. The luncheon progressed famously.

Presently, back in the cook-house, Wung Lo was zealously giving the last touches to the salad dressing. It was a strange Occidental dish, foreign to his understanding, which Mrs. Stanleigh had nevertheless taught him to prepare to perfection. As he meticulously stirred, the parrot, which Ting Fu had transferred to the cook-house so that it would not disturb his slumbers, broke again into its shrill cacophonies. Wung Lo paid no heed. He ignored the profanities hurled forth in bad Cantonese.

But suddenly Wung Lo paused, dripping ladle in hand, and listened gravely. The parrot was clumsily shifting one foot and then the other along the perch to

which it was tethered. It had ceased its vociferous blasphemy. Instead it was crooning softly in a subdued strain—no longer in the Canton dialect but in one that fell oddly familiar upon the North-China ears of Wung Lo. He could distinguish love-words,—they were quite unmistakable,—endearments, soft pet names, even a pet phrase known only to Wung Lo, for he had coined it himself in order that he might hear it fall blissfully from the lips of his wife alone.

For a long moment Wung Lo gravely listened. He remembered that one of the Malay boys had told him—that because of the parrot's chatter, Ting Fu had taken it off to the cook-house during the night.

Wung Lo quietly set the ladle back in the bowl of salad dressing. He proceeded to wipe his hands very clean. Then he selected from among his kitchen utensils a heavy knife, very long and sharp. He ran his thumb along the blade, testing its edge.

TING FU had grown tired of lolling under the tree and had gone to his bunk, where he might indulge his desire for real slumber. Wung Lo, softly tiptoeing thither, found him asleep, lying on his back, his hands folded across his fat stomach, while a gentle snore issued from his half-open mouth. Ting Fu's chubby crossed hands were like a symbol of contentment with the world and perfect satisfaction of the good things in life. Just above where Ting Fu's two fat thumbs were serenely pressed together, Wung Lo drove the knife in deep.

There was a barely audible groan from Ting Fu. It was more like a soft drawn sigh. His legs drew up convulsively, while his head lolled over to one side, as if he were very tired. Wung Lo went softly back to the cook-house, where he proceeded to cleanse the knife and then to wash carefully his hands.

Not until then did he notice that during his brief absence from the cook-house a lizard had sallied forth to investigate the bowl of salad dressing, with disastrous and tragic results. For once a look of dismay crossed Wung Lo's placid face. Here was calamity indeed. He would have to throw out the salad dressing, over which he had taken such pains, and make it afresh. But this would require time, and his mistress and her distinguished guests would be kept waiting.

Wung Lo's fingers flew. He mixed a fresh dressing for the salad, seasoning it to perfection. With great care he beat it until it assumed a smooth, limpid, exquisite consistency.

At last the dressing was prepared, and Wung Lo trotted rapidly toward the house with his two bowls. He could only hope that Mrs. Stanleigh would not be too distressed by the tardy arrival of the salad. It was inexcusable. Not for anything in the world would he have had her embarrassed before her guests. Nothing could mitigate his delinquency now, but as he entered the dining-room, bearing his two bowls, he murmured reassuringly to his mistress:

"Scuse, please, Miss Stanlee. Me come! Me come!"

He hoped that she would understand that the remainder of the luncheon would proceed unmarred.

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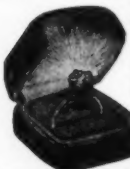
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TWO ROSES

(Continued from page 31)

He was lean, swarthy, perfect in manner, intensely proud, provincial, yet replete with knowledge of human frailty, and in consequence a perfected materialist and cynic. He gazed at the fair American widow with the weary calmness of a man whose life, from too early and fierce a burning, is already smoldering into ashes. He, for his part, was a widower. He decided to accept her tacit offer, and marry her for her money. So, fourteen months after Inkley Grounds' death, she became Princess Azzarossa.

Had she not at least reached the goal of her ambition?

SHE lived in an old Roman palace that was in itself a masterpiece of art, on a little cobbled square hemmed in by the tenements of the poor, where in other days the steel-clad retainers of the Azzarossa had poured forth to street-battles with some rival clan.

Within, on the "noble floor," the suites of great rooms showed on every side relics reminiscent of the past glories of the house. On the walls of the picture-gallery appeared the faces of men and women who had made history both magnificent and tragic. And from the subterranean passages, staircases and sealed dungeons there crept up, into these apartments agleam with tarnished gilt and armor, something chilly, sunless and awesome,—a coldness at noon, at night a hush that seemed to be awaiting a wild cry,—the subtle essence of a place whose gorgeousness is founded on blood and tears.

But Donna Amélie Azzarossa quickly filled the palace with a blaze of wax candles, a sweetness of flowers, the music of waltzes and the chatter of many guests.

Her parties were sumptuous. In the midst of the glitter she shone like a queen who has finally found her kingdom, as superb as the Roman ladies whose forefathers had been the makers of history.

Still she was not satisfied.

At last the apparent peer of these aristocrats, she now desired to become in some way preëminent. But Rome, after all, was a provincial city, with a high society now restricted by tradition to trivial enterprises. Within the circle of these palaces one dared to be exceptional only in small ways.

Small? No, one of her accomplishments was far from that. She introduced civilization to the Amélie rose.

For a long while, at the Villa Azzarossa outside the walls of Rome, that floral evolution had been in progress. It was Donna Amélie's luck to be princess at the climax of the work, and sponsor the completed flower. Nobody had ever seen a rose so large, so oddly yellow, so astonishingly flecked and edged with brown. It caused a furore.

In time the Amélie rose was mentioned respectfully in books on floriculture. Serious old gentlemen referred to it on the lecture platform. Its name was explained as follows:

"So called after Princess Amélie Azzarossa, in whose gardens, in the historic

Villa Azzarossa near Rome, it was produced."

Every evening Princess Azzarossa wore one of her roses. A cluster always ornamented her boudoir. As new bushes were grown, one saw those abnormal petals elsewhere. When she traveled to other parts of Italy, Amélie roses accompanied her, packed in ice. They bloomed forth on the Azzarossa estates—on the heights near Naples, amid statues and cypresses in Tuscany, at the villa on Lake Como. They appeared presently in the fashionable florist-shops. Ladies wore them when driving on the Maqueda of Palermo, in the Cascine of Florence; and the demimondaines at Monte Carlo, in the warm rooms ceaselessly tinkling with golden coins, employed Amélie roses to intensify their perverse seductiveness.

But it was not enough. She sent slips with her compliments to all the state conservatories of Europe. The Amélie rose, duly ticketed, went officially upon view in London, in Paris, in Vienna and finally in New York. It had become her obsession; for in it she saw her imposition of herself upon posterity, her pyramid, her monument of imperishable granite.

"What next?" she asked herself, unaware that she had reached the zenith.

One night Alessandro came to her boudoir for a talk: the subject was her future if he should happen to die. She questioned him about his health. Smiling calmly, he assured her that he was as well as ever.

In the dim boudoir, the flaring match, touched to his cigarette, made his countenance more medieval, more alien, more inscrutable than ever. He carefully told her how their affairs then stood. He discussed the opinions of his business agent and his stewards. He reviewed the claims of his married children by his first wife. Then he fell silent, thoughtfully regarding her. Across his gaunt face there passed a shadow. Was it the pain of a soul that had dwelt too long in the cold retreats of cynicism, so that now, in its need, it could not regain or attract the warmth of a spontaneous love?

He stood up and asked, when he had kissed her hand:

"How are the famous roses? You have never looked so charming. Sleep well."

At dawn she heard a motorcar in front of the palace. From her window she saw two men in top-hats beside the limousine. Alessandro joined them, and they drove away together.

Now she knew what was going to happen.

If only he had told her! If only she had interpreted that shadow on his face! He had gone uncomfirmed by the tenderness that she might so easily have afforded, since she had expended so little through all these years.

Prince Azzarossa's luck was bad that morning: they brought him back to the palace shot through the heart.

TWO years later, because her Roman eminence had become monotonous, Donna Amélie traveled to the United

States. There, surrounded by the smiling jealousy of women who could never be princesses, she expected to squeeze still another triumph out of life.

The newspapers of New York proclaimed her undiminished beauty, and tried to describe the majesty of her career in Rome. While breakfasting in bed, she read those effusions listlessly. What was wrong with her, that she could no longer thrill to homage?

In one article she found the statement: "Princess Azzarossa's home before her first marriage was Morleysville—"

For a while she groped back toward her girlhood.

"Was I happy then?" she asked herself. "Maybe when I was very small. Surely children are always happy."

A longing came to her to see again the place where, once on a time, she had perhaps been really happy. So she made a visit, unheralded, to Morleysville.

The railroad had built a junction-line to the town: Morleysville had begun to grow. New buildings had risen round the railway station. She engaged a carriage driven by an old man who did not recognize her.

People stared at the exquisite stranger, against the bosom of whose French traveling-suit was pinned an incredible rose.

When she had visited her father's grave, she sought the shabby old cottage, her chrysalis. In its place stood a factory, the tall chimneys spouting soft-coal smoke, which had blighted the trees near by. She told the old man to drive on.

Soon the air became pure and bright. Ahead she saw some willow trees. She alighted and approached the brook. Here everything was the same as ever, except that some one had added a rustic bench.

She sat down and lost track of time.

The sun sank. At a distance, on the roadway shaded by young foliage, the old driver and his old nag were dozing in the stillness. Through the amber light the swallows began to speed to and fro, uttering their sharp, distressful cries, as if searching and searching, more and more wildly, for something that was not to be found.

Still Donna Amélie sat motionless. She was waiting for some one.

Why should she expect chance to bring him there that evening? How did she know but that he, like the others, had departed from this earth?

Suddenly, raising her head, she saw him standing before her.

She had always pictured him as young; but time had not been as lenient with his physical aspect as with hers. His hair was gray; his face showed deep lines; and under his well-worn coat his shoulders were rounded. Nevertheless she distinguished in his features the same intermingling of fortitude and fineness, the same marks of one who finds solitude full of mysteries, and even traces of that sensitive romanticism which in youth had set him apart from other youths.

He stood there as a man might stand before an apparition that would dissolve at close approach. It was she who ended the silence with the words:

"Don't you know me, Virgil?"

Drawing near, he took her hand. After a moment of hesitation he sat down beside her on the rustic bench.

"This was not here then," she said.

"No," he replied, in a deep and more resonant voice than formerly. "I built it myself. I sometimes sit here in the evening."

For Princess Azzarossa the yellow sky became more brilliant; the murmur of the brook turned to music; the wild roses gave forth a fuller perfume. Here was one thing that had not changed or passed away. Here was true love, exalted and steadfast without hope of any reward.

At her urgency he described his life.

His wife was little Etta Tucker. Their children were growing up. In a simple way they were prosperous. It was an existence of small worries and small joys, industrious and placid. Nature, one gathered, still sometimes imparted her secrets to him, or interpreted the riddles that he found in books. There was a volume sticking from his pocket now, the "Meditations" of Marcus Aurelius.

"He lived in a palace too," Virgil Behan reminded her, and added: "Don't think us ignorant of your grandeur, Emily. What a life yours has been! With all that before you, no wonder you had to go."

He marveled at the rose on her dress.

From a bush beside the bench Princess Azzarossa plucked a wild rose, which she compared with her own.

Twilight was falling.

"Will you come to the house?" he asked in a humble manner. "Etta would be so glad to see you. And there are the children."

She shivered, now that the sun was gone. "I should be late," she murmured. "As it is, I shall almost miss my train." She stood up quickly, holding out her hand to him. "Good-by, my old friend."

The pallor of the twilight, which was over everything, made their faces wan.

Virgil Behan remained standing beside the rustic bench long after the sound of wheels had died away—until he heard in the darkness the whistle of a train.

THE Roman gossips discussed the change in Princess Azzarossa. Her fairness, it seemed, was not impregnable, after all: of a sudden it had begun to fail. In five years she looked her age. It was remarked that she had even tired of Amélie roses.

At last she avoided society. For the most part she lived on the smallest of the Azzarossa estates, deep in the Tuscan hills. Here there were hours when hardly a sound broke the silence. She sat with folded hands in a flower-garden from which the Amélie roses had been banished, staring at the bees. Her servants were peasants, who told one another:

"Now that her beauty is finished, she begins to think of God."

Sometimes, by her open window, through which entered an intoxicating redolence of springtime, she was impelled to write a letter. She described her present surroundings, the simplicity of her new life, the trivial and quaint events of every day. Gradually her phrases took on the cadence of an insatiable loneliness. Without realizing it, she sealed up in the envelope the aroma of flowers blooming round the grave of something long ago slain wantonly. And the letter of the princess traveled across land and sea and land to Virgil Behan the farmer.

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Replying, he also wrote of simple things. His descriptions of sunset and twilight took on an unintended pathos. She read: "I am writing this on the bench by the brook. A moment ago, as it seemed, the sky was like a canopy of what I imagined damask to be; but now suddenly it is so dark that I can scarcely see the page." She raised her eyes toward the barriers of the Tuscan hills. In Italy at that moment, as in America when he had composed those lines, dusk was ending the day.

Their correspondence became regular. As their penmanship grew uncertain, more and more they exchanged reminiscences of their youth. Even these allusions were all to trifling or maybe humorous incidents. In those letters a stranger would have discerned only the gentleness of old friends.

By a last effort of her will she succeeded in visualizing him as a young man; and it pleased her to think that he had last seen her when her beauty was still unimpaired.

At times some complication of her affairs compelled a journey to Rome.

There, from her boudoir window, she looked down with an ironic smile at the small cobbled square, where a group of

tourists were gazing up in awe at the famous palace of the Azzarossa. Or else she walked slowly through the state apartments. The shutters were closed. The scene of her dominance, once so warm and vivid, was dark, empty, cold. Between two groups of tarnished cherubs she saw staring at her with sunken eyes a tall, thin, white-haired woman in a dress of shabby black. She approached this apparition—her reflection in a mirror. A cry burst from her lips:

"Emily! Emily!"

But Princess Azzarossa was calling to the girl who had vanished years ago.

One morning, in Rome, she sat brooding in the rooms where she had so often arrayed herself in evening dress and jewels. Her maid entered, timidly proffering a rose.

"Signora Principessa, wont you ever wear one of these again?"

Princess Azzarossa threw the flower out of the window.

In the square below, a young man and a young woman of the people were strolling close together through the spring sunshine. Gazing into each other's eyes, they were unaware of the abnormal blossom in their path; and so, as they went on toward happiness, their feet crushed the Amélie rose into the mud.

THE WINNING HAND

(Continued from page 80)

gross, bald cheeriness of McMurtrie, and even the insignificant nondescript from Lightning Ridge, clucking in sympathy.

"Ow you feeling now, Tenn?"

Tenn sat fairly up.

"Good!" bellowed Mac, and nearly spilled a flask all over him in an access of generous emotion. "I knew you wouldn't flop—not just as we're winding up the neatest little rescue you ever see!"

Tennison made some sound.

"What? Pretty nigh. Yonder's the Aurora Bird—sister ship. She picked up our boats at daybreak. All present and correct except you and that young purser chap. Oh, a dinkum rescue! Ere's you—'struth, a hard do you must 'a' had of it the night long! And as for Fraley Bird, why, it seems there's a chance—"

Somebody dropped a silencing word; all eyes turned across the glittering in-shore strip toward the spot where, with small boats whisking about her like fussy attendants and the Aurora nosing up inquiringly outside, the wreck of the Evelyn lay aslant.

"Not now," observed a bearded officer presently, at the reading of some signal. "No chance now. They've found him!" And by the tone everybody knew the answer.

"It's going to be rough on the old man," was the added brief comment.

TENNISON, groping back to sanity through his dizziness, had an instant's vivid vision of just how rough it was going to be, had a mental glimpse of that stiff, white-haired figure as he had seen it on the Sydney pier—a little granite rock of a man scarred with sorrows, whose

rigidity under this crowning sorrow he could picture, whose stark, pioneer, eye-for-eye and penny-for-penny rectitude he himself—being the type he was—could understand completely.

"Well, anyway," McMurtrie was saying soberly, "counting Fraley Bird out, the rest of us been pretty lucky."

"Yes," agreed Tennison. "Yes—but Fraley Bird was luckier."

"Ow do you mean?" asked Mac.

Already Tennison had unbuckled the money-belt from about his waist. He opened the flap. He shook out the contents of water-soaked bank-notes—sheaves of them. He passed the lot to the officer standing by. "Ship's cash," he explained cryptically. "And the purser's own private account. I took charge of 'em. You do the same until you turn 'em over—d'you see?—to old man Bird himself. Complete, I think, he'll find them when he checks up the papers."

From among the wet mass of bills something fell out into his palm. He stared at it, a hard-crumpled little wad of pasteboard. Slowly he spread it out into its five separate parts, flattened each on the stone, separately.

"That's a good hand," remarked Mac.

Tennison had been a gambler; he also had been a square gambler—he never welched on any of his debts.

"It's a good hand," he assented. "It's the winning hand. It beats me!" he drawled grimly.

And he arranged it in order of the cards to get the full effect, Fraley's cards, the cards he had filled on a draw at the very instant the ship struck—the ten, jack, queen, king and ace of hearts,

THE CHRISTMAS HANDICAP

(Continued from page 52)

of old Doc Kelly's matchless liniment, occupied the same stall where years before he had munched his pre-Christmas oats.

Summer blended into the quiet fall, and Major Bob strolled over to the track every morning to watch Chickahominy thundering over the course under double wraps. The Major always asked the same question, and got the same reply from Bubbles:

"Pears like he's roundin' to fo'm, eh, you young rascal?"

"Yessir, Mister Major, dis ol' hawss like to pull my ahms off. Sure goin' to teach them N'Awleas babies where dey gets off at."

"Likes a distance, too—eh, you scamp?"

"Sure does, for a fac', boss; does we go a half-mile, ol' Chickahominy jes' get hisself wahmed up an' int'rested; does I give him his haid, he sure ambulates; yessir, he jes' 'bout flies!"

Even old Doc Kelly had to admit that the big gelding was loosening up, but he attributed it entirely to the wet bandages, the warm fomentations, and above all, to the miraculous and well-known powers of his liniment.

"Fiddlesticks!" snorted the Major, and not until he became unbearably thirsty did he condescend to speak again to the veterinarian.

EARLY in November, Chickahominy worked a mile in one minute and forty-six seconds on a track that was apparently two seconds slow, and he was still going along nicely at the end.

The Major wrote a letter that night to And You McIvor at New Orleans:

It gives me great pleasure to inform you, sir, that Chickahominy is now a very capable horse. Unfortunately, circumstances will not permit of my bringing him on to New Orleans, but I trust that you still have sufficient confidence in my judgment to send for the horse, and enter him yourself in the Christmas Handicap. I should very much like to have him meet King William, who I read is doing excellently; and if you will pardon the further suggestion, Jockey Sutherland, the little lad whom I brought last year from Kentucky, has excellent hands, and is, I believe, a free lance.

Awaiting your valued advice, allow me to subscribe myself, sir—

Your old friend,
ROBERT ARLINGTON.

To which McIvor immediately replied:

The news regarding Chickahominy is deeply gratifying, but I sincerely trust that you will not allow any circumstances to prevent the Arlington colors from being represented in the Christmas Handicap. Have talked the matter over with various members of the Old Guard (they are fast disappearing, Major), and we all agree that your absence is quite unthinkable. Merely as a business proposition, I am inclosing a draft to cover expenses, and we

will let Chickahominy take care of the matter with interest in due time. I trust you will not disappoint your old friends.

Yours truly
CHARLES McIVOR.

P. S. Jules wants to know if he shall prepare the customary dinner, and of course I said yes. Sutherland will be delighted to handle Chickahominy. The little chap loves you, Major, and he rode three winners yesterday. Best boy on the track right now.

The Major blew his nose repeatedly, and showed that letter to old Doc Kelly, and to old lady Tompkins, who ran the hotel, and to the editor of the Pleasanton Times, who wrote a column about the distinguished Major Arlington, "who has been summering in our midst with the famous race-horse Chickahominy." The article, boiled down, and sent to the San Francisco and Oakland papers, earned the Pleasanton journalist two dollars and seventy cents in space rates, and surrounded the Major's departure with considerable éclat. Bubbles was particularly rapturous, for New Orleans was his conception of paradise; and Gulfport, where Mammy Jackson lived, was but a short hop to the east!

DECEMBER found a gray gelding scrambling from a car to the leather-colored turf of Jefferson Park, from which McIvor, the Information Kid, Canada Dick Tracy and all the thousand and one characters of the race-track wove a trail in and out of the city. Major Bob breathed once again familiar atmosphere, and discussed with Jules at nightfall the gustatory delights of a bouillabaisse.

Two weeks before Christmas the Information Kid cornered McIvor. The purveyor of news was very much excited. "I seen a miracle this morning," he confided. "Old Chickahominy worked a mile in one minute and forty-one seconds with his mouth open. Look here, boss, don't let the Major waste him for the Handicap; the Toomey bunch are leveling with King William in that race, and it's sewed up. Slip the old hound into a cheap sprint right away, and we'll all get aboard for a killing."

But McIvor merely smiled. "Go tell it to the Major," he advised.

The Kid buttonholed Chickahominy's owner.

"Cheap sprint, Major," he begged. "The track's cardboard now. Don't tip your hand by letting Sutherland ride him. Put an ordinary boy up, smuggle your old sleeper in at seven furlongs and give us a chance to go into the old sock."

"Not a step, suh," thundered the Major, "—not one step until the Handicap itself; my hono' is at stake, suh!"

"Oh, hell!" said the Kid. It lacked three days of Christmas when the hustler again broached the subject to McIvor. The latter's picturesque profession had been seriously affected by the pari-mutuel machines, and he was now operating "from the ground."

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THE TULLOSS SCHOOL, 133 College Hill, Springfield, Ohio

"Thought you told me little Sutherland agreed to ride Chickahominy."

"He did."

"Well," grunted the Kid, "he's welched, then; Ted Fuller has the boy booked for a leg-up on King William. That means they're going after the dough just like I told you. Santa Claus aint going to pull down no twenty-thousand-dollar purse while the Toomey bunch is in business."

Major Bob received the news of Jockey Sutherland's defection to the ranks of the enemy with stupefaction. McIvor wanted to lay the case before the stewards, but the Virginian was not of that mind. He was hurt, mortally hurt, by the behavior of a boy on whom he had lavished in the bygone days gifts that reflected an old man's fancy. It was a cruel blow to another of his cherished ideals, but he chose to make light of it.

"The boy is young; it is ha'd fo' him to recognize the obligations of friendship, suh. Bubbles will ride fo' me, I reckon—a bit inexperienced, but ve'y faithful, suh, ve'y faithful!"

McIvor managed to corner Sutherland in a restaurant that night.

"Throwing the Major down, eh?" he questioned. "Kid, you wont get very far with that kind of stuff! You've been eating off the old man every Christmas for three years, and now you slip him the double cross when it means life and death."

Little Sutherland's pale face whitened still more. "I can't explain, Mr. McIvor," he stammered. "I'm awful sorry, but I just had to ride King William." And that's all the boy would say.

CHRISTMAS DAY dawned, a New Orleans Christmas, with firecrackers exploding in the street, and the soul of the Crescent City, which is somewhat that of a coquette, beginning to forecast that delicious period which begins with Twelfth Night and climaxes deliriously in the Mardi Gras.

Out to Jefferson Park streamed the sport-loving thousands to witness the running of the Christmas Handicap at a mile and a quarter—the great majority to pin their faith to King William, the take-a-chance gentry to support Captain Adams, Cedar Lane or the Parnassus stable, and only the paddock swipes, rubbers and jockeys to risk hard-earned dollars on the Santa Claus entry. The paddock cares nothing for the dope-sheet and is irreconcilably opposed to a favorite. It is the place where hunches are born, dreams materialize or dissolve, and blind loyalty persists. When in doubt, the paddock jams a pin through the entry list, or writes all the names on pieces of paper, rubs the scraps between soiled hands, and blows its breath. The last bit of paper to cling to the palm is surely the winner.

Post time brought a field of ten thoroughbreds to the barrier, and sent And You McIvor hustling up to where the Major was standing in the clubhouse balcony. McIvor had small hopes of Chickahominy finishing in the money, and he was fearful that the horse's owner would find in the Christmas Handicap a little more weight than any gallant old gentleman should be asked to bear.

Major Bob was watching the field through glasses.

"A ve'y great moment in my life, suh," he observed. "A sma't field, a ve'y excellent cou'se. In the old days, suh, reckon I'd be a-gettin' fifty to one on my ho'se and I'd be a-bettin' him right on the nose. The machines, suh, are abominable contraptions, quite abominable. I have wage'd a hundred dolla's, but the infernal odds depend upon the entiah play—an insult to a man's intelligence, suh!"

McIvor nodded sympathetically, his eyes on the squirming wall of color a quarter-mile down the track. Suddenly he stiffened; electric gongs sounded, and the mob boomed into voice.

"They're off!" announced McIvor. "Good start, too! Here they come—Marietta setting the pace, King William a head on the rail, Captain Adams third—a neck. Others bunched. . . . Chickahominy on the outside. Bubbles ought to hustle him up a bit, Major—"

The Major lowered his glasses and watched the field rush past the grandstand and enter the mile.

"Y'all are mistaken about Chickahominy, suh," he said quietly. "He's a Glo'iana ho'se, and they come from be-hin' at the propah time."

"Ah, yes—to be sure!" murmured McIvor politely.

He leveled his glasses again as the rushing hedge of color swung into the back-stretch, and the early pace-setters began to weaken.

"There goes King William! Sutherland isn't taking any chances."

A bay blur surmounted by a scarlet blouse that flapped in the wind shot out from the pack and took command by a length, then two. The grandstand clamor heightened.

"Captain Adams moving up," said McIvor. "Parnassus getting a poor ride. Ah, there goes Star Balcony on the outside. Bring him up easy, boy, and you got a chance—"

"A ve'y excellent race," said Major Bob. "A little mo' close than I expected, but ve'y excellent."

McIVOR shot a quick, puzzled glance at his companion. Accustomed as he was to seeing men mask their emotions, he could not understand the Major's calm tone; for the race was now at the half-mile pole, King William was setting his own pace well in the lead, and pounding along twelve lengths in the rear, Bubbles was taking the dust of the second division.

And You muttered something under his breath, but even as his fertile imagination tried to picture some way of softening the final blow, his trained eyes saw Chickahominy swing to the crown of the track where the footing was firmest, and lengthen his awkward stride. The gap of daylight between the hurrying field and the Virginia colors contracted.

The Major's calm drawl sounded in McIvor's ears:

"That Suthe'land boy is a powe'ful rider, but an A'lington ho'se neve' fo'gets, suh; reckon y'all are a-goin' to see some tall runnin' round heah!"

McIvor did not reply. His glasses were glued on the far turn, striving to

interpret that sudden burst of speed from Chickahominy. It was too far to determine whether Bubbles was making his drive now, or whether the boy still had the reins around his wrists. If the former was the case, the old gelding would have nothing left in the stretch, but if he was still running under single wraps, then anything was possible.

The multitude kept its eyes on the leaders, but the discerning gentry with the field-glasses, watching for the unexpected, saw a green-and-blue sash bobbing along in seventh position, then sixth, then fifth, then become blotted out for a moment by the fourth horse.

A buzzing in the grandstand showed that the crowd now saw the new challenger and was striving to identify him.

McIvor's voice sabered the din. "The old rock of ages! Major, look at him take hold of Cedar Lane. He's got him, too! My God, if he was five years younger!"

The field made the far turn and straightened out into the stretch, King William leading cleverly on the rail, and four horses behind him, running abreast.

A long moment, with the triumphant pean of the King William adherents holding undisputed sway. Then came a discordant note, the high-pitched call of the children of the paddock, and it grew in volume:

"Come on, you Major Bob! Come on, you Virginia horse! Oh, you dinner! Oh, you old Santa Claus! . . . King William's quitting. . . . Here he comes. . . . Come on, come on, come on!"

One position out from the rail, bandaged, badly ridden, but gaining at every jump came Chickahominy. He lapped King William at the paddock, lunged up to his neck; a head, a nose—and then for a moment they bobbed together, stride for stride. In that one instant, with little Sutherland banging away on King William, ding-dong, hammer and tongs, hurling the bay horse onward, Fate hesitated.

Major Bob dropped his glasses and his cane. His fingers twitched at his mustache. His voice came in an imploring but dignified whisper:

"Chickahominy, suh! . . . Vi'ginia, suh! . . . Chickahominy!"

And in that last fifty yards, with the paddock gone crazy, there was no doubt that Sutherland outrode Bubbles; but King William in turn was outgamed by a battle-scarred gray veteran with the flame of the ruby in his eyes.

In the judges' pagoda two men squinting along the wire and holding their breath agreed that in the very last jump the nostrils of the bay had been blotted out by those of the Major's horse.

Volcanically the stands erupted, as is always the case when a long shot comes home; but high above the general babel thousands of people caught a high-pitched, shamelessly exultant rebel yell. It came from an old gentleman in the clubhouse gallery, his hat off, his immaculate cuffs disarranged, and his glorified face turned to the sky.

THE INFORMATION KID scuttled around until he found And You McIvor. The Kid had missed the best thing in his race-track experience, but he was not wasting any time worrying over that. "Slip me a case note," he bargained,

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"and I'll tell you why Sutherland rode King William instead of Chickahominy."

McIvor sensed that the news was worth while. He peeled off a bill and handed it over.

"Right," acknowledged the Kid cheerfully. "Now, here's the low down. Sutherland figured the race lay between the two horses. He wanted the Major's entry to win, but he didn't think the old skate could do it. So he decides to ride King William to make sure that Chickahominy would win. Get the angle?"

"On your way!" rebuked McIvor. "You're getting worse every hour. King William never got a better ride in his life!"

"Gimme a chance to finish," snapped the Kid. "I tell you that Sutherland figured the best way to help the Major was to give King William an easy ride, understand? But the boy couldn't go through with it; he aint made that way; and when he got to figuring it over, he saw that Major Bob was a square-shooter too. So he went ahead and did his best, and he come damn' near beating the horse he was praying would win! Now the little fool is crying his head off in the jockeys' room because he's in dutch all around. Aint that one for the book?"

McIvor whistled thoughtfully.

"I imagine," he mused, "the Major will be more tickled over that information than the extraordinary size of his new bank-account. You tell Sutherland that I'll fix everything up all right."

CHRISTMAS NIGHT in La Louisienne, with the long tables groaning under Southern delicacies, a five-dollar bill under each of one hundred plates, and fat old Jules waddling around and imploring everyone: "Eat, *mes enfants!* Only in Jules' does a man do anything else but starve. *Allons!* The same to you, *mon brave!*"

At one end of the long room sat And You McIvor, polished knight of the Goddess of Fortune, at the other Major Robert Arlington of Fairfax County, Virginia. Bubbles headed one amazing line of grinning faces, little Sutherland the other. An hour passed, and Major Bob arose, not without difficulty, for rheumatism is a penalty of advancing years. But his voice held the old clear resonance.

"Y'all happy down the?"

"You know it, Major! 'Atta old talk!"

"Y'all a-goin' to be heah again next yeah?"

What a clatter and banging!

Major Bob raised his glass. He looked down into the eager happy faces of another generation, and he realized that the relentless curtain of Time was slowly descending between them. Therefore he put his soul into the toast, and stood erect and dignified as he wished them to remember him while he rendered the epilogue to the play:

"Mo' sensitive than a woman—mo' cou'ageous than a man—the tho'oughbred, suh—God and Virginia!"

THE INGENIOUS SEÑOR 'OOGIS

(Continued from page 60)

Mr. Castiello. He wanted to ask a question.

He asked it soundlessly. The dance vanished. William awoke, cramped and cold. The room was dark. Where was he? Thomasville? Waycross? Savannah?

Much is said, *tremolo*, with the pathetic stop pulled all the way out, of the black moods of depression that assail artists and musicians. Temperament, you know, poor things. One who sells typewriters can boast no such distinction. Bill Hughes merely sat on the edge of his bed and saw all that was dear and familiar recede and vanish into aching loneliness, and knew that he was only the semblance of a man, without strength or worth.

He had the feeling that it was the chill of dawn that was in his bones. But no, the nearness of that throbbing music indicated festivities going on within the hotel; *marimbas* did not play in the hour before dawn. A sudden chorus of yells came to him.

He opened the door and looked out. The music vibrated suddenly loud; the *marimba* was in the corridor. And past the seven bored musicians filed a snake-dance of young men in evening clothes, shouting, singing, scuffling. Their high spirits thrust him still farther into the outer darkness, alone.

At the farther end of the corridor he saw people in the dining-room; the dinner-hour was not yet over. When he

went out, through the door of a private room he saw the young men about a long table, lifting glasses to an uproarious toast. While he ate mechanically he could hear them: wild yells, singing, the crash of something breaking. Laughter. Drunken fools!

As he strode angrily past the door again, he saw one of them, coat-tails gathered coyly about his legs, mincing among the dishes on the table in shameless burlesque of an Oriental dance. He shut himself in his room; but he could not shut out that thudding, insistent music. He jammed his hat upon his ears and went out, striding aimlessly along the street. The lights of a theater caught his eye, and he went in, glad of any escape from himself.

A girl usher glanced at his ticket and then at his face, and ushered him unexpectedly into a box near the stage.

"I didn't buy a box seat," he protested.

"No matter; there is much room. And perhaps you would like to sit with your countrymen."

THERE were four Americans in the box—and Mr. Castiello. Mr. Castiello rose courteously and introduced his companions; William shook their hands blankly and turned morose attention on the stage.

A chubby young girl with wide, charming black eyes and curly hair sat near the footlights, a guitar across her knees.

Smiling intimately down on her dim audience, she sang in a furry, pleasing little voice, thrumming a staccato accompaniment, an odd, lilting folk-song. William wished he could follow the words; those faces below indicated lively appreciation, and when she finished, there rose a quick storm of handclapping and shouts of "Olé! The Little Doll!"

The chubby singer had the happy faculty of projecting her friendly little personality all through the dim spaces of the theater, of seeming to draw her audience intimately about her. She sang on, smiling. Even William was tricked into soothing forgetfulness.

Suddenly she faltered. A stamping of feet, catcalls, falsetto whoops, had broken out at the door; a line of young men in evening clothes pushed down the aisle, each with his hands on the shoulders in front, tramping in exaggerated lock-step. The merry-makers of the hotel had transferred their festivities to the theater, and were taking care that their entrance should not pass unnoticed. The little singer struggled on for a moment, and stopped, her lips trembling, eyes wide in childish distress.

"Sing, sister, sing!" they challenged. It became a chant as they settled into a row of orchestra seats, heedless of the scowls behind them. "Sing, sister, sing; sing, sister, sing!"

But no sooner did she make the attempt than one of them, spying an empty box, leaped up and clambered noisily, monkey-like, into it; the others seized on the inspiration and swarmed after, until they were packed in and hanging over the rail. "Sing, sister, sing!"

For one enraged instant William saw the little singer tremble on the verge of tears. Then she laid her guitar deliberately on the floor, folded her hands in her lap and faced them, waiting.

"Good girl!" breathed William.

Somewhat abashed by her calm regard, the festive ones gradually subsided. Black eyes still smoldering, she took up her guitar and sang, turning her shoulder very pointedly on the disturbers and crooning directly to the Americans in the box opposite. They grinned back delightedly, each claiming the honor of her attention.

"Olé! Viva los machos!" yelled a voice from the gallery. Whom the Little Doll honored, the gallery gods honored also.

"There speaks a Costa Rican," smiled Mr. Castiello. "In Costa Rica they call the Americans so—machos, mules. Meaning no offense, of course; it is as they say here and in Mexico, *gringos*."

That it was no offense was evident. Laughing applause greeted the cheer; the audience below, too, relished the Little Doll's rebuke to her tormentors.

Not so the rebuked. A jarring, raucous voice rose from their midst.

"Mueran los gringos!"

Bill stiffened. "What did he say? 'Death to Americans?'"

"Pay no attention," said Mr. Castiello soothingly. "They are drunk."

"Come on, you fellows," raged Bill. "Are we going to let those snipes get away with that? Come on; we can clean the lot of 'em."

But the wiser ones only grinned. "Keep your shirt on. Sit down. An

American wants to keep out of trouble in this town."

"Who are those yaps? Do they own the earth?"

Mr. Castiello shrugged. "Practically," he said. "That is the 'Mancha Brava.'"

"Mancha Brava?"

"Literally, the 'Bold Blot.' It refers, I believe, to something in their insignia. A sort of club, you know—the young bloods of the town, the sports. They do anything they choose, and their fathers pay."

"Man's-size way to enjoy themselves," fumed Bill, "tormenting a young girl that's only trying to do her best." And then: "Look," he added hopefully.

Unobtrusively policemen were filtering in, gathering behind the box of the Mancha Brava. But Mr. Castiello dismissed his sanguinary inference with a gesture.

"They'll not dare touch them."

Evidently he was right. One of the festive ones, clinging monkeylike to the outside of the box, perceiving himself to be separated only by a few feet from the stage, made a daring leap; confused at finding himself in the full glare of the footlights, he grimaced and galloped away into the wings. His companions greeted the feat with shouts of acclaim; the Little Doll tried gallantly but vainly to ignore the diversion, an exasperated gallery god cried, "¡Fuera los bolos!" ("Throw out the jags!")

The policemen did not so much as move.

"Come on," said Bill in high disgust; "let's get out of here. I saw a café across the street, and if I stay here I'm going to swell up and explode."

THEY waved friendly hands to the harassed Little Doll and went out. A half-hour later they saw the plodding legs of the multitude go by the swinging doors of the café. The theater was emptying. Suddenly, ludicrously, those decorous legs began to run, to scurry past in wild confusion. There came the sound of struggles, of grunts, of muffled imprecations.

"Viva la Mancha Brava!"

They leaped to the door. Yonder fled the panicked crowd; and there before the theater the Mancha Brava was at grips with the police.

"Get 'em, Majesty of the Law!" gloated William. "Soak 'em! Power to your elbow!"

They were about even in numbers; for the moment it seemed that the superior enthusiasm of wrong might triumph over justice. Then, directly before William's eyes, the weapon of the Law came into play. A club rose and fell. Thwack! It was sickeningly loud. A tall youth slumped between two gendarmes; a red stain crept down his face and dripped on his white rump shirt-front.

It did not please the vindictive Mr. Hughes as much as he had expected. In fact, it did not please him at all. Everything considered, it seemed a little harsh. They were fools beyond a doubt, young fools with no proper regard for public dignity or the rights of others, but not criminals. Into William's mind slipped a memory—a long line of boys wearing nightshirts over their clothes, snake-dancing down a busy street in a Western city; a rush of bluecoats; the flicker and thud



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of nightsticks. Yes, nightsticks, and they had only been celebrating a football victory! Absently William's hand caressed a scar under his hair.

The two policemen had dragged their victim to the sidewalk and were putting handcuffs on the limp wrists. From the mêlée in the street erupted a slender figure in torn evening clothes, arms flailing, the wild light of battle glowing in his dark young face, and assaulted them, shrilling defiance. One of the policemen turned and swung his club viciously, but the blow never fell. From the sidewalk Bill Hughes, Class of '14 of a certain Western university, had put out a sudden arm and snatched the weapon from the hand of the Law.

He heard cries of remonstrance behind him, but he had no time to listen. Policemen swarmed upon him; he flung them off and leaped into the street. "Let's go!" he roared, and was dimly surprised to hear the war-cry echoed shrilly at his elbow. "Let's go!"

It was the slight youth in torn evening clothes, fiercely beset. "Let's go!"

"Let's go!"

"Way ho!"

Wild versions of it echoed from here and there. The Battle of el Teatro Hidalgo centered speedily about the Berserk bulk of William Hughes, would-be vendor of typewriters. He passed the club to his valiant little lieutenant; he struggled hip-deep in the clinging, sinewy bodies of fierce little gendarmes, plucking them loose and hurling them headlong, open-handed. The relief of action, the unrestraint of battle, flooded him with savage happiness.

"Viva la Mancha Brava!"

THE tall façade of the Teatro Hidalgo exploded and melted slowly into a shower of stars. Far off in the jungle the tom-toms began to beat, *thump-thump, thump-thump*. It grew very monotonous. One would almost think it was inside his own head. *Thump-thump, thump-thump*.

"Are you hurt?"

That clear, anxious voice seemed vaguely familiar. Once, a long time ago, he had heard it, shouting. Yes, that was it, shouting, "Let's go!" Go—where? He was deep down in darkness, swimming up, up—that urgent voice on the surface.

He sat up. Water was running down his face. A bearded man nodded satisfaction and turned away. A figure knelt beside him, a slight figure in torn evening clothes, and beyond, a circle of similar figures bent on him dark, sympathetic eyes.

"Viva el gringo!"

He had heard that voice before too—one night in a theater, a girl singing, a raucous yell of "*Mueran los gringos!*" But that, too, was a long time ago.

He was dazedly conscious that hands dragged him to his feet, patted his back. The slight youth solemnly took from his own lapel a button, a white button with a bold red blot in its center, and affixed it to William's—at which his companions broke into acclaim.

"Viva la Mancha Brava!"

There was a huge iron-barred door, a corridor giving on many barred doors—

stone walls, a desk with policemen grouped about it. A jail! His head was swimming; he was being led out and put into a carriage. The slight youth got in beside him.

"Your hotel?"

A swaying, a jarring through cobbled streets. The blessed smoothness of asphalt. A stop.

"Please to gif me your card?"

Fumblingly Bill supplied it, and replaced the necessary hand on that noble throbbing lump that pushed his hat awry. He wobbled in and sank gratefully across his bed. The tom-toms were beginning again: *thump-thump, thump-thump*. The very monotony of it was restful.

Slowly, very slowly, it died away. . . .

Thump! Thump!

He started awake. A bright, painful sun stabbed his eyeballs. His head was gone—no, it had only stopped aching. He could think with it. Doing so, he groaned.

Oh, what a fool!

Thump! Thump! Thump!

It was a peremptory knocking at the door. "Who is it?"

"I, señor," stated a voice helpfully.

"Enter."

The door swung open, disclosing a policeman. William eyed him with sick resignation.

"El Señor 'Oogis?"

"Yes."

"A summons, Señor 'Oogis."

"Very well," said William dully.

He ripped open the envelope with numb fingers and sat looking earnestly at the thick sheet of paper, trying to make the words register on his brain. At length, suddenly, he succeeded.

The policeman was rocking strangely on his feet. It made William quite giddy to watch him; he let himself back gently on the bed and watched the fat cupids spinning madly about the ceiling.

IT was falling dusk in the Plaza. Before the statue of the heroic General sat a young man. In his lapel the young man wore a button that proclaimed him a member of an organization of the wild youth of San Salvador, but strangely enough he ruminated in English.

"Very likely," he confided cynically to the General, "very likely He regulates everything, down to a nickel's worth of postage-stamps."

It might have been supposed that he referred to the Deity; in a free republic, of course, there could be no man whom one would mention thus with a capitalized pronoun. But the General understood. Pointing fixedly with his sword to the Presidential Palace, he returned the young man's gaze; and it may be—the light was dim—that he winked.

Mr. Castiello, crossing toward the Café Nacional, paused beside the young man. Mr. Castiello was not happy, but he had been in the export too long to allow a single failure to rob him of equanimity. He proposed a little drink.

"By way of congratulation," he said.

"I wish," said William soberly, "that I deserved it."

"But Arziñega informs me that you have the order?"

"Friendship business," said William, a little scornfully. "Gratitude stuff."

Mr. Castiello seated himself thoughtfully. "You Americans," he murmured, "you are all alike. You expect all the world to be guided by cold reason, like yourselves. Why not friendship? Is it not a splendid thing? There are so many good typewriters." He regarded the button in William's lapel, a white button with a bold red blot in its center. "You learn quickly," he said. "You could never have reached the President through the regular channels."

"No?"

"No," said Mr. Castiello. "It is not easy. Arziñega and the President's secretary are my good friends, and in two weeks they could not secure an audience for me."

He eyed the lump above William's

brow, a lump of such noble proportions that even in the twilight it was discernible, and permitted himself a pensive smile. "Amazing!" he murmured. "The method was—you will not mind?—a little undignified, but audacious, clever. I saw your plan the moment I recognized the President's son."

Down a side-street before the Teatro Hidalgo began the mellow thudding music of a *marimba*. Overhead swept a sudden flight of little birds, wheeling, darting, faintly piping, under the high-arching, friendly dusk of a conquered province.

"Typically American," sighed Mr. Castiello. "Ah, you Americans! It is your ingenuity that makes you masters of the earth."

THE SETTLING OF THE SAGE

(Continued from page 85)

past the cows, then looked up as if just aware of her approach, and waited for her. The men were Bentley and Carp.

Bentley greeted her cheerily. Carp nodded without a word.

"What are you two doing up here?" she demanded without parley.

"I repped with the Three-Bar wagon, and Carp worked with you for a spell, so we sort of know the range," Bentley explained. "Slade sent us up to drift any strays back south."

"Those you were driving are Three-Bar stuff—every hoof," she said. "All two-year-old she-stock."

Bentley turned and regarded the little herd they had just passed.

"Them? Sho—we wasn't driving them," Bentley denied easily. "They just drifted ahead of us as we rode down the bottoms. A cow-critter will always move on ahead of a man. We rode on past 'em as soon as we decided to amble along."

She knew that they were on safe ground. Any cow would drift on before a horseman.

"The only way to convict a man on a case like this is to shoot him out of the saddle before he has a chance to pass the cows," she said. "That's what will happen to the next Slade rider that gets noticed with any Three-Bar cows moving out in front of him and headed south. You can carry that word to Slade."

She whirled Papoose and headed back for the ranch, the intended visit to the Brandons postponed. Harris was piling brush in the lower field when she arrived; she informed him of the act of the two men.

"I wouldn't put it past Carp," he said, "but I hadn't sized Bentley up just that way. It's hard to tell. If Carp shows up here again, we'll make him a visit in the middle of the night—and he won't trouble us much after that."

"We'd better pay Slade a night visit too," she said.

THE evening of the next day the beef-herd trailed into the lower-end of the Three-Bar valley and bedded for the night. In the morning the trail-herd was headed for the railroad under a full crew, for Harris had kept all hands on the job.

There was none of the fast and varied work of the round-up—the trail-herding of beef to market seemed a slow and monotonous procedure in comparison. The cows were drifted slowly south, well spread out and grazing as they moved. Harris detailed two men to ride the "points," the two forward extremities of the herd; two others rode the "drags," holding to either flank of the rear end of the drive. In choppy country he detailed a third pair to skirt the middle flanks and prevent leakage up any feathering coulees.

The chuck-wagon followed a mile behind, and the horse-wrangler brought up the rear, bringing the *remuda*, much depleted in numbers from full round-up strength, for it now carried but three extra horses for each man.

The third morning out from the home ranch broke stormy. Gray, leaden skies and low-scudding drab clouds drifted over the foothills and obscured the view of the peaks. A nasty drizzle dampened the face of the world and laid its clammy touch on all living things. This condition prevailed all through the day, and shortly after the cows had been milled and bedded for the night, the drizzle turned to rain, now falling straight and soft, again in fierce squalls whipped by varying shifts of wind. The wagon stood close under a hill, while the herd was bedded on a broad flat at the mouth of a valley.

The men lay in the open, their bed-tarps folded to shed as much moisture as possible. The soggy patter of the rain on Billie's tepee lulled the girl to sleep.

She was roused by voices outside as the guards changed shifts, and she judged that it must be near morning, the fourth change of guards.

The sounds ceased as the men who had just been relieved turned in for their sleep. A horse neighed shrilly within a few yards of her tepee. Another took it up, and an answer sounded from the flats. There was a crash of pistol-shots, a rumble of hoofs and the instant command of Harris.

"Roll out! Roll out!" he called. "Saddles! On your horses!"

Even as he shouted, there came the swish of wet canvas as the men tumbled from their bed-rolls, the impre-

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"HOMEWOL"

cations of the suddenly awakened. She thrust her head from the tepee flap, the water cascading down her neck. The successive flashes showed the men tugging desperately at boots and chaps, their grotesque, froglike leaps for their tethered mounts. She saw Harris buckling his belt as he ran, and the next flash showed him vaulting to Calico's back.

The thunder of hoofs drew her eyes to the bed-ground, where a black mass surged, then bore off up the valley. A scattered line of riders bore down on the herd, two ghostly apparitions among them throwing the cows into a panic of fear. She knew these for riders flapping yellow slickers in the wind. As the light faded, she saw three horizontal red streaks cut the obscurity and knew that one of her guards was in the midst of the rustlers, doing his single-handed best. The red splashes of answering shots showed on all sides of him. She tugged on her chaps and boots, slipped Papoose's picket-rope and vaulted to his back.

The scene was once more illuminated as she rode from the wagon. A big pinto horse was strung out and running his best, the other Three-Bar men pounding after him. A riderless horse circled in the flat, a dark shape sprawled near him, and she wondered which one of her men had gone down. A knot of horsemen was turning up an opening gulch on the far side of the valley. A half-dozen Three-Bar riders veered their horses for the stop. Harris turned in his saddle, and his voice reached her above the tumult.

"Let 'em go!" he shouted. "Let 'em go! Hold the herd!"

Far off on the opposite side, she made out a lone horseman riding at a full run along the side-hill above the cows as he made a supreme effort to reach the head of the run. The Three-Bar men split and streamed up both sides of the bottoms. The lightning-flashes had ceased except for brief, quivering plays of less than a second's duration. She hung her spurs into Papoose and trusted to his footwork. The swift little horse passed one rider, then another. There were only the rumble of hoofs and the crazed bawling of cows to guide her as she drew near the rear of the herd. A half-flare showed the pinto a bare twenty yards ahead, Harris putting him at the slope to pass the cows. She swung her own horse after him, and she felt the frequent skid of his feet on the treacherous side-hill. Papoose braced on his haunches and slid down a precipitous bank, bucked up the far side and down again, then swooped across a long flat bench. Three times she felt the heaving plunge and jar as the little horse skimmed over cut-bank coulees and washes which her own eyes could not see in the dripping velvet black.

From the sounds below, she knew they were well up on the flanks of the run and nearing the peak. The stampede seemed slowing. A long, wavering flash revealed Harris a dozen jumps ahead. Papoose followed the paint-horse as Harris put Calico down the slippery hill-side and lifted him round the point of the herd. In the same flash Billie had seen two slickers out before the peaks of the run, flapping weirdly in the faces of the foremost cows. This accounted for the slowing-up she had sensed. Two of

her men were before them, and she wondered how this had come to pass.

The lightning-play broke forth once more. She saw two riders swinging round the opposite point. The two slickers were working in the center. Harris' gun flashed six times. She jerked out her own and rolled it. The two riders who had just rounded the far point joined in. Cows in the front ranks held back from this fearsome commotion out in front. Others, driven by the pressure behind, forged past them, only to hold back in their turn as the guns flashed before their eyes.

THE storm ceased as suddenly as it had begun, and for two miles Billie rode in inky darkness. The last mile was slower. It was showing gray in the east, and the night-run had spent its force. The herd stopped, and the cows gazed stupidly about, standing with drooping heads and heaving sides. Three-Bar men showed on both flanks and in the rear. They had held the drove intact and prevented it splitting up in detachments and scattering through the night.

Horne and Moore rode over to them, and for the first time the girl noticed that the two men who had wielded slickers out in front of the run were nowhere to be seen.

"Who was the pair out ahead?" Moore asked. "And what swallowed 'em up?"

Harris shook his head.

"Billie and I were the first to make the front," he said.

"Not any," Moore stated positively. "I saw 'em five minutes before you two swung round the point. I was wondering who had outrode the paint-horse and Billie's little nag."

Moore's left side was plastered with mud, as was the left side of his mount.

"I was on guard and halfway up the far side," he said. "Split-Ear took a header with me and delayed me some."

He pointed to the mud encrusting his clothes. Billie knew that he was the lone rider she had seen on the flanks of the herd as she rode away from the wagon. The fall accounted for their rounding the point ahead of him. Moore was looking off across the country.

"Do you mean to tell me you didn't see those two slickers flapping out in front?" he demanded.

"I confess I didn't observe any," Harris said. "You're getting spooky, Moore. A couple of white cows, likely, out ahead of the rest."

Moore regarded him curiously.

"Maybe that's so," he said, "—waving their tails in the air, sort of." He grinned and turned his horse to head back a bunch that drifted out of the herd.

"The boys made a nice ride," Harris said to Horne. "You float round from one to the next and tell 'em we'll soon have a feed. I'll ride back and send the wagon up."

Billie rode with him as he skirted the brush and started on the return trip. Her mind was occupied with the two riders who had slowed the run and disappeared. There had been something familiar about them, for every man has his individual way of sitting a saddle, the same as individuality of gait when on foot. As she had viewed them in the lightning-flash,

they had closely resembled Bentley and Carp. But she decided that this resemblance had been but a fancied one, roused by the fact that the two men had been much on her mind of late.

"We're not hurt bad," Harris said. "The boys held them bunched in good shape. Maybe forty or so head down with broken legs—and ten pounds of fat apiece run off the rest."

A hatred of Slade was growing within her. Harris, too, was pondering over Slade's change of tactics. He felt assured that Slade's own men had not participated in starting the run. Slade would not let any considerable number of his boys know that much about him. Some of Lang's men had undoubtedly been hired to stampede the Three-Bar herd.

"The very fact that Slade is so bald with it is proof that he sees the necessity of crowding us fast," Harris said. "If we get too big a start, he's blown up—and he hasn't had anything to work on but plowed ground. Now he's out to worry us at odd ends. We can expect a steady run of mishaps now, for he'll work fast—but we'll win out in the end."

She nodded a little wearily, for she knew that with Slade throwing all his forces against her, the Three Bar would be hard pressed. In addition to this worry, her mind was concerned with the riderless horse she had seen as she rode away from the wagon, the huddled figure sprawled in the flat.

"Who was it?" she asked at last, and Harris divined that she was harking back to the fallen night-guard who had tried to head the raiders alone.

"I've been trying not to think about that," he said. "Lanky was a good pal of mine. I saw him go down, but I couldn't stop right then."

Evans occupied a place in her regard that was perhaps a notch higher than that of any other of the crew.

"Can't we prove anything on Slade—do anything to stop him?" she demanded. "If they've killed Lanky, I'll perjure myself if it's the only way. I'll have Alden pick him up and I'll swear I saw him do the thing himself. He's as guilty as if he actually had."

"I've a bait or two out for Slade," Harris said. "But that way may prove too slow. If Lanky's gone under, I expect I'll have to pick a quarrel with Slade and hurry things along."

"Don't you!" she objected. For all of her confidence in his efficiency in most respects, her implicit belief in his courage, she could not forget the awkward swing of his gun, and she had a swift vision of Harris facing Slade without a chance.

A crash of wagon-wheels and the voice of Waddles admonishing the horses interrupted her. The chuck-wagon rolled round a bend as the big cook followed the trail of the night-run.

"How is Lanky?" was Harris' first query.

Waddles jerked a thumb over his shoulder. Evans, shot once through the arm and a second time through the shoulder, reclined on the triple-thickness bed-roll the cook had spread for him on the floor of the wagon.

"Only nicked—clean holes and no bones," Lanky said. "I'll be all right as

soon as Waddles will let me out of this chariot and I get to riding comfortable on a horse."

"He'll come round fine in a few days if we can keep him off'n a horse and riding comfortable in the wagon," Waddles countered. "I've given him orders to that effect."

Evans groaned.

"He drives over places I wouldn't cross afoot," he complained. "Did you hold the run?"

Reassured on this point, he flattened out on his pallet, and the wagon held on toward the herd.

The weary cows were held over for a day of rest. The night-guards were doubled, and this precaution was maintained during the succeeding two stops before reaching the shipping-point.

HARRIS and Billie sat on the top rail of the loading chute while the last few Three-Bar steers were being prodded on board the cars.

Harris slipped from his perch and motioned to Moore and Horne.

"You can go uptown now and take on a few drinks. Hunt up an old friend or two and wag your chins. Make it right secretive and confidential, and make each one promise faithful not to breathe a syllable to another living soul. That way the news is sure to travel rapid."

He returned to the girl as the stock-train pulled out. Two hands waved a joyous farewell from the top of the cars, delighted at the prospect of a trip to market with the steers.

"I don't pretend to regret that old Rile played even for Bangs," Harris said. "But I wish he'd sorted out some one else in the albino's place. It was bad business for the Three Bar when Harper went down."

"He was the head of the gang," she said, "the worst of the lot."

"And for that reason he was able to hold them down," Harris explained. "It was some of the outfit from over in the Breaks that stampeded us. Slade wouldn't let his own boys know that much about him, so he'd hire Lang. Harper had brains. He wouldn't have gone in for that. Lang has thrown in against us. He's all bulk and no brains, and as savage as an Apache buck. He'll hang himself in the end, but in the interim he may hand us considerable grief."

CHAPTER XII

THE wild riders of the Breaks no longer mingled with other men with the same freedom as of old. Some fifteen men throughout the country felt themselves marked and set apart from others. Friends no longer fraternized with them at the bars when they rode into the towns. Doors which had always been open in the past were now opened furtively if at all. Lukewarm adherents fell away from them and avoided them even more studiously than the rest. This swift transition had sprung apparently from no more than a whisper, a murderous rumor which persisted in the face of flat denials issued from its supposititious source.

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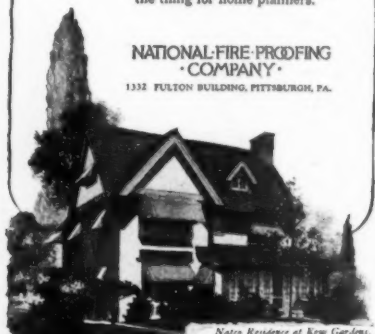
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as the railroad it was current gossip that the Three Bar would pay a thousand dollars reward for each of fifteen men, a fast saddle-horse thrown in and no questions asked. The men were named, and if the rumor was based on truth, it was virtually placing a bounty on the scalps of certain men just as the State paid bounty on the scalps of wolves—except that it was without the sanction of the law.

This backfire rumor had established a definite line with fifteen men outside, conspicuous and alone, and those who had once followed the hazy middle-ground of semi-lawlessness with perfect security now hastened to become solid citizens whose every act would stand the light—for the whispers seemed all-embracing, and it was intimated that new names would be added to the original list to include those who fraternized with the ones outside the pale.

Those not branded by this alleged bounty system were quick to grasp the beautiful simplicity of it all. Some recalled that a similar rumor, supposed to have originated with old Con Ristine, had wiped out the wild bunch that preyed on the Nations Cow-trail—that the Gallatin clean-up had resulted from a like report which Al Moody was reported to have launched.

It had the effect of causing the men so branded to view all others with suspicion, as possible aspirants out to collect the bounty on their heads. It sowed distrust among their own ranks, for there was always the chance that one, in seeking safety for himself, might collect the blood-money posted for another. The reference to the fast saddle-horse was guarantee that no questions would be asked before the price was paid and no questions answered after the recipient had ridden away from the Three Bar with his spoils.

Calvin Harris flatly denied that there was a shred of truth in the report. Al Moody, years before, had also denied his responsibility for the rumors on the Gallatin range; and Con Ristine had repudiated all knowledge of the whispers that traveled the Nations Trail. But in each case these very natural denials had served only to strengthen men's belief in the truth of the reports; and inevitably they had established a hard line that cut off the men so named from the rest of the countryside.

Harris knew that his own life was forfeit any time he chanced to ride alone. As a consequence he had taken every possible precaution. Winter had claimed the range and hardened the ground with frost. The full force of Three-Bar hands had been kept on the pay-roll instead of being let off immediately after the beef was shipped. These riders were stationed in line-camps out on the range, their ostensible purpose being to hold all Three-Bar cows close to the home ranch, but in reality they served two ends, acting as a cordon of guards as well. The two woodcutters were camped in the edge of the hills behind the ranch and daily patrolled the drifts that now lay deep in the timber for signs of skulkers who might have slipped down from behind and stationed themselves on some point overlooking the corrals.

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Three times in as many weeks strangers drifting in from other localities stopped in Coldriver and profanely reported the fact that for no reason whatever, while passing through the Three-Bar range, they had been held up and forced to state their business in that neighborhood.

Hostilities had ceased. The Three-Bar girl had anticipated a series of raids against the cows wearing her brand, swift forays in isolated points of her range, but no stock losses were reported. On the surface it appeared that Slade had given up all thought of harassing the Three Bar. But the girl had come to know Slade. He would never recede from his former stand.

CHRISTMAS found the range covered with a fresh tracking-snow which precluded possibility of a raid, and all hands had been summoned to the home ranch for a two-day rest. Harris knew that cowhands, no matter how loyal to the brand that pays them, are a restless lot and must have their periodical fling to break the monotony of lonely days; so he had provided food and drink in abundance. The frolic was over and the hands back on the range. Harris sat with Billie before her fire.

"They'll be satisfied for another two months," he said. "Then we'll have to call them in for another spree."

This evening conference before the fire had come to be a nightly occurrence. Together they went over the details of the work accomplished during the day and mapped out those for the next. From outside came the crunch of hoofs and the screech of logs on the frozen skid-trail as the last mule-team came down with its load.

Most of the logs had been skidded down, and the men worked in pairs, erecting the cabins on each filing. The cedar posts had been hauled and strung out along the prospective fence-lines. The wagons, under heavy guard, had made two trips to the railroad to freight in more implements and supplies. Thousands of pounds of seed-oats and alfalfa seed were stored at the Three Bar, along with sixty hundred of cement.

"Another two months, and the cabins will be roofed and finished," Harris said. "Then we'll be through till the frost is out of the ground. We'll start building fence as soon as you can sink a post-hole; and we'll have time to break out another two hundred acres of ground before time to seed it down."

As Harris outlined his plans, his words were tinged with optimism and he allowed no hint of possible disaster to creep into his speech. But the girl was conscious of that hovering uncertainty, the feeling that the months of peace were but to lure her into a false sense of security, and that Slade would pounce on the Three Bar from all angles at once whenever the time was right.

She found some consolation in the fact that Lang's men no longer rode through her range at will, but skirted it in their trips to and from the Breaks. She attributed this solely to Harris' precautions in the matter of outguards; for of all those within a hundred miles she was perhaps the single one who had not heard the sinister rumor that was cutting Lang

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and his men off from the rest of the world.

Men were discussing it wherever they met; in Coldriver they were speculating on the possible results; across the Idaho line and south into Utah it was the topic of the day. And a lone patron of Brill's store found the same question uppermost in his mind.

CARSON was one of the many who were neither wholly good nor hopelessly bad, one who had drifted with the easy current of the middle course. And he was wondering if that middle course would continue to prove safe. He played solitaire to pass the time. His horse and saddle had been lost in a stud-poker game just prior to his catching the stage to Brill's, where his credit had always been good. He rose, stretched and accosted Brill.

"Put me down for a quart," he said.

"Whenever you put down the cash," Brill returned.

"What's the matter with my credit?" Carson demanded. "I've always paid."

Brill reached for a book, opened it and slid it onto the bar. He flipped the pages and indicated a number of accounts ruled off with red ink.

"So did Harper," he said. "He always paid—and Canfield—and Magill; these others too. Their credit was good, but they've all gone somewheres I can't follow to collect. And they was owing me." He tapped a double account. "Bangs was into me a little. Old Rile paid up for him, and then got it in his turn—with his name down for a hundred on my books. Harris and Billie Warren paid up for Rile. Now, just whoever do you surmise will pay up for you?"

"Me?" Carson inquired. "Why, I aint dead. I'm clear alive."

"So was they when I charged those accounts," Brill said. "But it looks like stormy days ahead. I sell for cash."

"I'm not on this death-list, if that's what you're referring to," Carson announced.

"But it's easy to get enrolled," Brill said. "Your name's liable to show up on it any time. Seen Lang in the last few days?"

"Not in the last few months," Carson stated, "—nor yet in the next few years. He's no friend of mine."

"I sort of remember you used to be right comradely," Brill remarked.

"That's before I really knowed Lang intimate," Carson said. "He didn't strike me as such a bad sort at first; but now he's going too strong. Folks are getting plumb down on him."

"What you mean is that folks who used to be friendly are growing spooky about getting their own names on that list," Brill said. "That's what has opened their eyes."

"Maybe so," the thirsty man confessed. "But anyway, I'm through."

"They're all through!" Brill said. "A hundred others just like you, scattered here and there. It's come to them recent just what a bad lot Lang is. It's hell what a whisper can do."

"It's when that whisper is backed by a thousand-dollar reward," Carson agreed. "If he really pays up, it'll wreck Lang's little snap for sure."

Brill dabbed his bar-cloth at an imaginary spot on the polished slab and nodded without comment.

"I reckon he launched that scheme because Slade put a price on him first," Carson said.

"I didn't know Slade was into this," Brill stated softly. "There's no proof of that—not a shred."

"No more than there's any proof that Harris is behind these rewards," Carson said. "But you know that Slade is out to wreck the Three Bar since they've planted squatters there."

The storekeeper failed to respond.

"There's likely a dozen men looking for Harris right now," Carson prophesied.

"But it's hard for one of 'em to get within ten miles of the ranch," Brill observed. "So while they're maybe looking for him, it's right difficult to see him that far off."

"I don't mind admitting that I'm for Harris—as against Slade," Carson said.

"Just between us two, I don't mind confessing that I'm neutral—as against everything else," Brill returned.

A HALF-DOZEN men clattered up in front and surged through the door. More arrivals followed as the regular afternoon crowd gathered before the bar. There were many jobless hands drifting from one ranch to the next, "grub-lining" on each brand for a week or more at a time during the slack winter months.

Carpenter rode up alone. Brill lowered one lid and jerked his head toward Carson.

"Broke—and reformed," he said. "Maybe!"

Some minutes later Carp bought the thirsty man a drink.

"You looking for a job?" he asked. "I can use you down my way."

Carson was well versed in the bends of the devious trail, and Carp's ways smacked of irregularities. Carson had ideas of his own on why the other man was allowed to start up an outfit down in Slade's range. One day Carp's name would be cited on the blacklist. As diplomatically as possible, he refused the offer of a job.

The storekeeper smiled as he noted this. Carson had turned into a solid citizen almost overnight. As Carp left him and joined another group, Brill poured Carson a drink.

"You're a fair risk, at that—as long as you stay cautious," he remarked. "I'll stake you to a horse and saddle. You can ride the grub-line with the rest of the boys till spring and get a job when work opens up." He slid a bottle across the bar. "Here's your quart."

The Sheriff dropped in for one of his infrequent visits to Brill's. He waved all hands to a drink.

"I've just been out to the Three Bar to see Harris," he announced, "and asked him about this news that's been floating about. He came right out flat and says he's not offering a reward. That's all a mistake."

Every man in the room grinned at this statement. There was no other possible reply that Harris could make.

"Of course," the Sheriff said reflectively, "of course there's just a chance that Cal lied to me."

"He lied, all right," Carp prophesied. "I'd bet my shirt he'll stand to pay the price for every man that's cited on that list."

"Pshaw!" the Sheriff deprecated. "That's dead against the law, that is. He can't do that."

"He will do it," Carp predicted. "If I was on that list, I'd be moving for somewheres a long ways remote from here."

"Then you'd better be starting," Alden counseled mildly, "for Harris was just telling me that your name had got mixed up with it. Morrow's name has sprung up too. Cal seemed mystified as to how it had come about, for he says you and Morrow never rode with the others on the list. He couldn't figure how this thing come to start."

"Figure!" Carp snapped. "He figured it out himself; who else?"

One or two who had been drinking with Carp moved over to speak with others and failed to return. He was left standing alone at the bar. He shrugged his shoulders and went out.

The Sheriff drew Carson aside.

"If you're wanting a job, I'll stake you to an outfit and feed you through till spring. Forty a month from then on. I'll need a parcel of deputies, likely, after that."

"You've got one," Carson stated. "I'll sign now."

The storekeeper, the Sheriff and the new deputy stood at one end of the bar.

"It's queer that folks don't see the real object of this rumor," Brill observed. "If Harris only wanted to wipe out those on the list, he wouldn't go to all this fuss. He'd just put on an extra bunch of hands and raid the Breaks himself. Swear he caught them running of a bunch of Three-Bar cows. Simpler, and considerable less expense."

"Then what's the object of this bounty?" Carson insisted.

"That's aimed at the doubtful folks," Brill stated, "—folks that was on the fence, like you. This death-list makes them spooky, and they turn into good little citizens in one round of the clock. It leaves the worst ones outside, without a friend. Everyone lined up solid behind the law! Public sentiment will start running strong against those outside. Then it'll be easy for the Sheriff and a bunch of deputies—like you—to clean the country up from end to end, with the whole community backing your play."

Carson considered this for some time. "Well, I can furnish the deputies," he said at last, "—boys that are strong for law and order from first to last."

"I've got about all I need," the Sheriff said, "—a dozen or so, mostly old friends of yours. I've picked 'em up on and off in the last two weeks. They're strong for upholding the last letter of the law—just like you said."

"A dozen?" Carson asked. "How'll you raise the money to pay that many at once?"

"I'm sort of expecting maybe the Three Bar will make up the deficit," Alden said. "It's cheaper than paying rewards."

The conclusion of this fine novel of the West will appear in the next, the February, issue of *The Red Book Magazine*. Be sure to read it.

Keep That Wedding Day Complexion



The blushing bride of today should be the blooming matron of tomorrow, retaining the charm of girlhood's freshness to enhance radiant maturity. For bridal beauty should not fade, nor the passing of each anniversary be recorded on your face.

Keep the schoolgirl complexion which graced your wedding day, and you will keep your youth. With a fresh, smooth skin, no woman ever seems old.

The problem of keeping such a complexion was solved centuries ago. The method is simple—the means within the reach of all.

Cosmetic cleansing the secret

To keep your complexion fresh and smooth you must keep it scrupulously clean. You can't allow dirt, oil and perspiration to collect and clog the pores if you value clearness and fine texture.

You can't depend on cold cream to do this cleansing—repeated applications help fill up the pores. The best way is to wash your face with the mild, soothing lather blended from

palm and olive oils, the cleansers used by Cleopatra.

Science has combined these two Oriental oils in the bland, balmy facial soap which bears their name. You need never be afraid of the effects of soap and water if the soap you use is Palmolive.

How it acts

The rich, profuse lather, massaged into the skin, penetrates the pores and removes every trace of the clogging accumulations which, when neglected, make the skin texture coarse and cause blackheads and blotches.

It softens the skin and keeps it flexible and smooth. It freshens and stimulates, encouraging firmness and attractive natural color. Oily skins won't need cold creams or lotions after using Palmolive. If the skin is inclined to dryness, the time to apply cold cream is after this cosmetic cleansing.

And remember, powder and rouge are perfectly harmless when applied to a clean skin and removed carefully once a day.

Don't keep it only for your face

Complexion beauty should extend to the throat, neck and shoulders. These are quite as conspicuous as your face for beauty or the lack of it.

Give them the same beautifying cleansing that you do your face and they will become soft, white and smooth. Use it regularly for bathing and let it do for your body what it does for your face.

Not too expensive

Although Palmolive is the finest, mildest facial soap that can be produced, the price is not too high to permit general use on the washstand for bathing.

This moderate price is due to popularity, to the enormous demand which keeps the Palmolive factories working day and night, and necessitates the importation of the costly oils in vast quantity.

Thus, soap which would cost at least 25 cents a cake if made in small quantities, is offered for only 10 cents, a price all can afford. The old-time luxury of the few may now be enjoyed the world over.

THE PALMOLIVE COMPANY
Milwaukee, U. S. A.

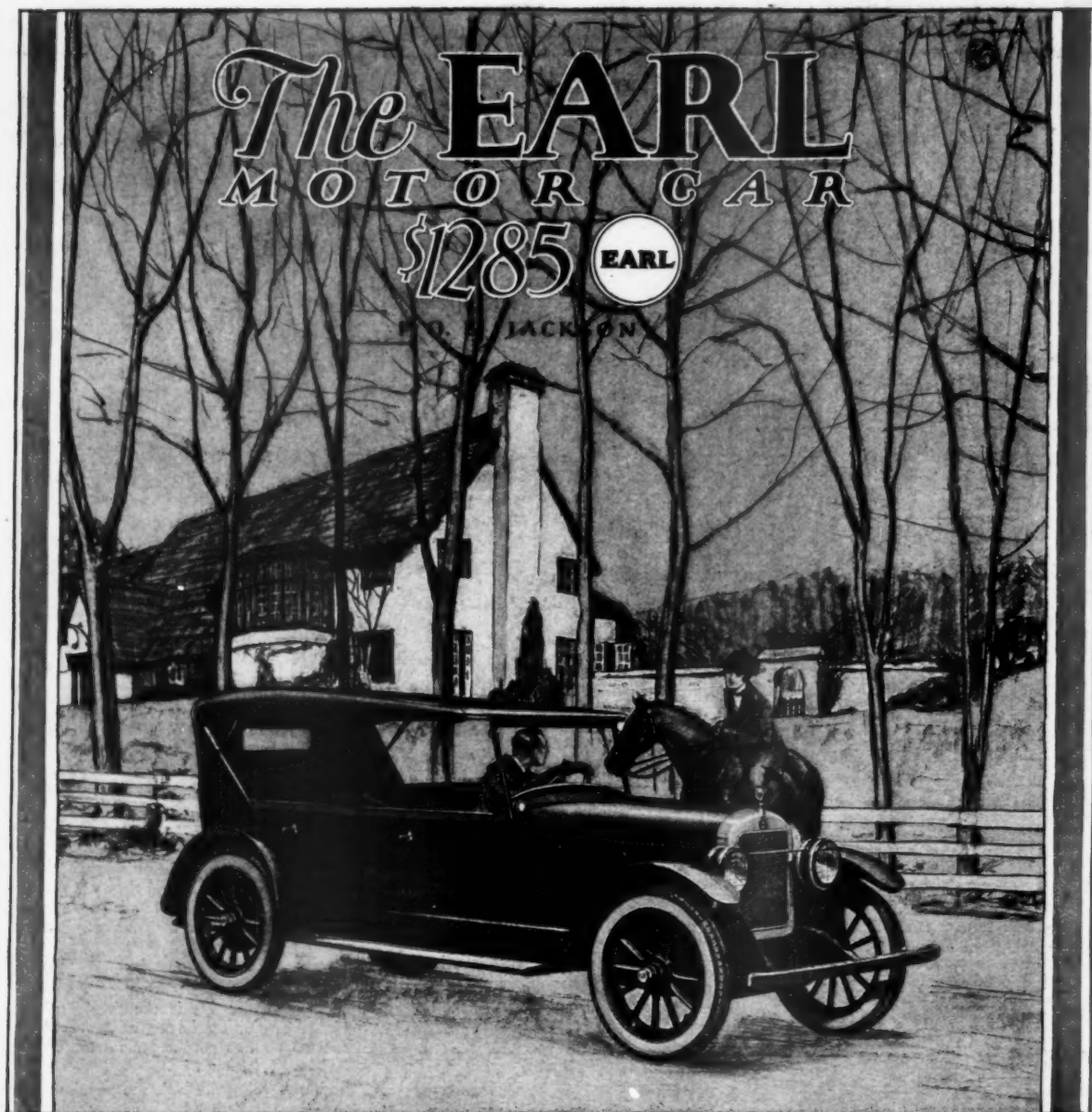
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The EARL high-powered motor will delight you with its quick pick-up and reserve energy under all conditions of traffic. For two years its hill-climbing ability at low, as well as high speeds, has proved its remarkable range of power.

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